Economic outlook not so rosy, say businessmen

STORY ON PAGE A2

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2001 ★ 66 PAGES 6 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 14 ₱15

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KL, Jakarta want Misuari tried in RP

By Carlito Pablo

THE PHILIPPINES, Malaysia and Indonesia have agreed that Moro secession or independence is not a solution to the Mindanao problem, and that renegade Moro leader Nur Misuari will be returned here to face trial for rebellion.

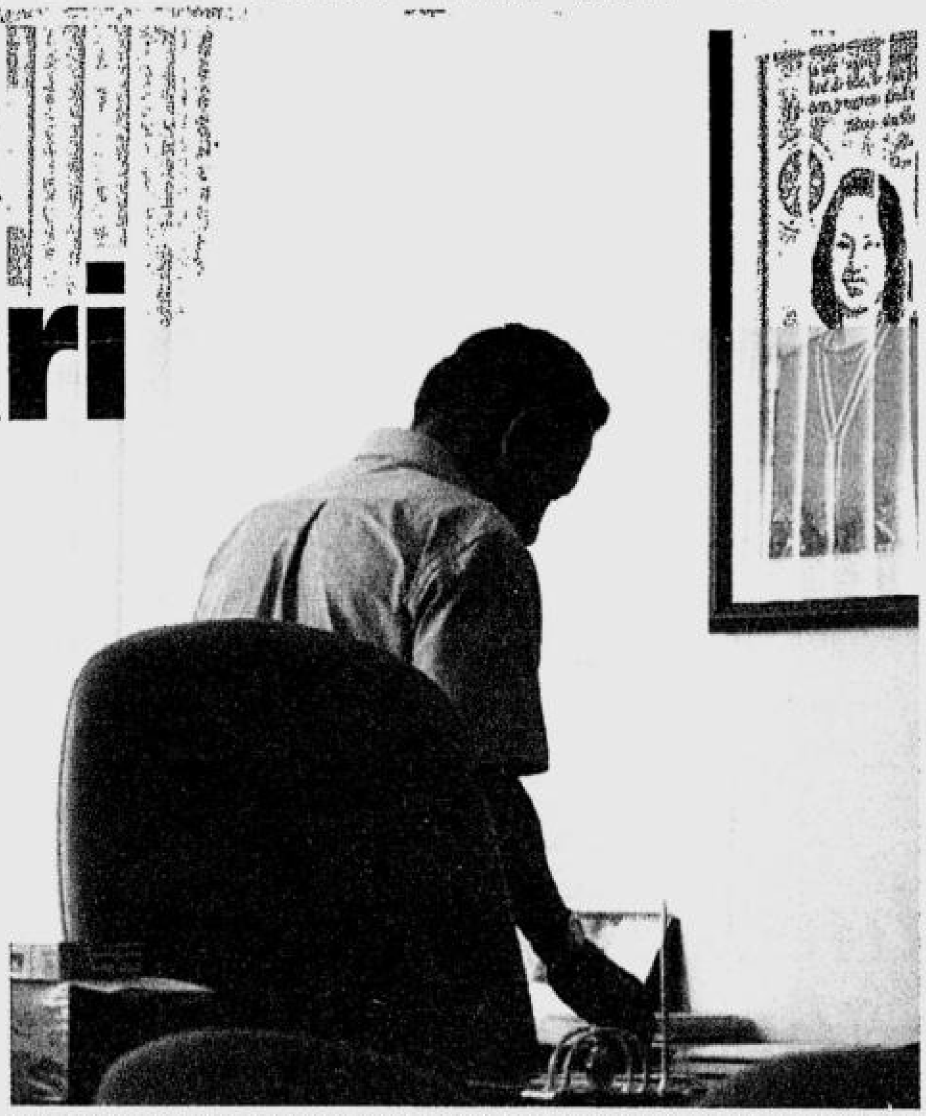
These are just two of a number of "consensus points" that, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced yesterday, had been reached by the foreign ministers of the three countries. She thanked Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri "for their support toward peace and development in Southern Philippines and in the entire region."

The Associated Press quoted Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda as saying that he and Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar "conveyed the interest" of the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to see that Misuari "be granted, on humanitarian grounds, a sanctuary to a third country," and that the Philippine government refused.

The terms of Misuari's repatriation were contained in a communique signed Thursday by Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona and visiting officials Wirajuda and Albar.

It was presented to the President Thursday

KL/ A4



THE TROUBLE with goodbye is when one isn't quite ready to pack up and go like LTO chief, retired Gen. Edgardo Abenina, who suddenly finds himself removed and replaced on Friday.

JOAN BONDOC

Abenina forced out of LTO

By Agnes E. Donato and Norman Bordadora

EDGARDO Abenina yesterday broke down as he bid goodbye to his staff after announcing his resignation as head of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), a position he held for only 10 months.

He had been forced to resign, according to Abenina's spokesperson.

The official line from the Palace had to do with Abenina's age.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said a Malacañang search committee had recommended the appointment of Roberto Lastimoso to the post because Abenina had already reached his retirement age.

Abenina turned 66 on Oct. 13.

Yesterday the President named Lastimoso, former chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), as Abenina's replacement.

Abenina's retirement age is apparently not the real reason for his sudden resignation.

Retired Commodore Domingo Calajate, chair of the Rebo-

ABENINA/ A16

CLOSE call: The Makati police bomb disposal group extracts and destroys a bomb found beside the Allied Bank. Police said it was more powerful than the deadly LRT bomb last Dec. 30.

ERIK ARAZAS

Bomb triggers Makati scare

Explosive at first ignored by guards

By Alcuin Papa

A CONSTRUCTION worker got the shock of his life when a package he discovered Thursday night near the Allied Bank Building on Ayala Avenue in Makati turned out to be a powerful bomb.

After security personnel in the area ignored the package, bomb experts from the Makati City police, who were called in the next morning, destroyed the bomb in a controlled explosion just a few meters from where it was planted.

Police said the bomb packed more power than the one that exploded inside a Light Railway Transit (LRT) in Manila on Dec. 30 last year that left 14 people dead.

Bomb experts found two alarm clocks attached to wires, close to 26 kilos of ammonium nitrate soaked in kerosene, improvised blasting caps, and a nine-volt battery. Ammonium nitrate was the main ingredient used in the truck bomb that killed 168 people and destroyed the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995.

President Macapagal-Arroyo congratulated the Makati police for swiftly destroying the bomb.

She said the package was "part of a destabilization plot" against her administration. She refused to elaborate.

Ms Macapagal had accused the opposition of plotting to oust her but also warned of attacks from Abu Sayyaf bandits holding two Americans and one Filipina hostage in Basilan.

"We have been anticipating terrorist attacks because those behind the Dec. 30 attacks are keen on celebrating their anniversary," the President told reporters.

Ms Macapagal said there were "search and destroy" operations against terrorist elements to prevent a repeat of the Rizal Day bombing of an LRT station, a bus and a shopping mall last year. The attacks killed 17 people and injured 102 others.

The President ordered the Philippine National Police (PNP) to go on red alert.

Director General Leandro Mendoza, chief of the Philippine National Police, placed the entire police force on double alert.

"The President would like to assure our people that our police and intelligence units have not for a minute let their guards down the past many months. They will continue to be alert so our people will enjoy the holidays in peace," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said.

The bomb was found by Mario Tabianan, 25, of Camarin, Caloocan City, at the side of the Allied Bank across from the Locsin Building, according to SPO4 Gerry Dino, chief of the Makati City Police Special Weapons and Tactics-Explosives Ordnance Division (SWAT-EOD).

Police cordoned off the area and evacuated the nearby buildings.

At around 10 a.m., the bomb was destroyed through a "controlled

BOMB/ A16

Gloria defends her troops

By Carlito Pablo

THE MESSAGE from the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines came on strong and clear.

"Nobody and no one can take away the proud legacy that lives in the Armed Forces," President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday, thus showing where her heart lies in the recent allegations against some top-ranked military officers of collusion with the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Speaking during the 66th founding anniversary rites of the AFP in Camp Aguinaldo, President Macapagal assured the military of her continuing trust and support.

"As your Commander in Chief, I can tell you that efforts of those who try to diminish the merit of professionalism are in vain," said the President, who rose to power after the AFP withdrew its support from President Joseph Estrada last January.

GLORIA/ A16

Ombudsman drops plunder raps vs Erap, Brother Mike

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman yesterday dismissed for lack of evidence the plunder and graft charges filed against deposed President Joseph Estrada, El Shaddai leader Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde and 17 other respondents in connection with the sale of nine pieces of land worth P1.22 billion in 1999.

Lawyer Ernesto Francisco, who recently filed an impeachment complaint against Ombudsman Aniano Desierto with the House of representatives, filed the plunder complaint.

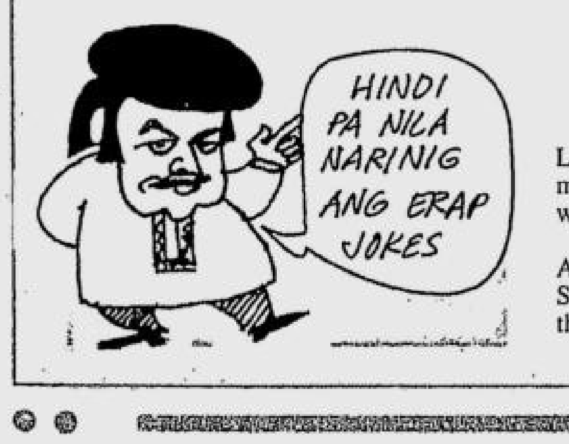
The government purchased the land from Velarde for the right of way of the C-5 Road link of the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway (MCTE). In a 35-page resolution, a special panel led by Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarito P. Gervacio Jr. said the sale was a legitimate transaction between Velarde's Amvel Land Development Corp. and the government as represented by the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) and the Public Estates Authority (PEA).

Gervacio said the panel found no basis to conclude that the contract was grossly disadvantageous to the government.

"On the contrary," he said, "the government was able to save money when it decided to purchase the questioned properties at P15,355, and not at P20,000, per square meter."

Considering that the crime was not shown to exist, "conspiracy could not likewise be appreciated," Gervacio said. "It is a well-settled rule that conspiracy must be proven as clearly as the commission of the offense itself."

OMBUDSMAN/ A17



My dear Watson, it's world's funniest joke

LONDON—After months of serious scientific study and much merriment, 100,000 people have finally picked the world's funniest joke.

In an experiment named Laughlab, a joke about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes and his sidekick Dr. Watson emerged the winner on Thursday from a possible 10,000 entries.

MY/ A16

Argentinian leader quits due to crisis

BUENOS AIRES—Argentine President Fernando de la Rua resigned Thursday as opposition Peronist leaders rejected his call for a national unity government amid growing unrest over economic austerity policies aimed at staving off financial collapse.

"I address you to present my resignation as president," De la Rua wrote in a message to the opposition-controlled Congress.

"My message today to ensure (the country's) governability and to form a government of national unity was rejected by the parliamentary leaders."

A leading lawmaker said the Senate and Chamber of Deputies would meet Friday in joint session to elect an interim president.

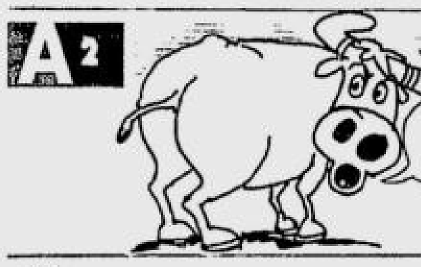
"Consensus will emerge in the coming hours on the name. Any member of the legislature could be elected as well as any of the 24 provincial governors," Peronist majority leader Sen. Jose Luis Gioja said.

The interim president will fill the remaining two years of De la Rua's term which expires in De-

ARGENTINIAN/ A4

EDWIN BACASMAS

BABE in the arms of President Macapagal is not too happy about all the fuss generated by the presidential presence at the Nala on the occasion of the annual "Pamaskong Handog Para Sa OFWs." *(Story on Page A3.)*


DAPAT LUTASIN NA YAN!

For traders, economic outlook not as rosy

BY GIL CABACUNGAN

THE DETERIORATING peace and order situation is the main stumbling block to economic recovery this year and will continue to be the gravest challenge facing the country next year, the Makati Business Club said yesterday.

In its yearend economic outlook, the MBC said that unless the peace and order situation improves, "all bets for a solid and sustainable recovery are going to be impaired."

This was the non-economic factor that was holding back the economic take-off as investors and consumers are concerned over the rise in serious crimes like kidnapping, said the MBC, which groups the leaders of the country's biggest corporations.

The MBC said allegations of corruption and the persistent political bickering among opposing political forces are distracting the government and preventing it from attending to pressing economic issues.

The group said the foundations for recovery and growth have been built, particularly in the areas of budget deficit management and the planned reforms in the procurement and expenditure process.

The MBC projects a modest 3.2 percent growth in gross domestic product next year anchored on the resilient services and agriculture sectors.

It said the anticipated global recovery in the second half would augur well for the falling electronics export sector.

Other factors that could spur economic growth next year are the privatization of the electric power industry, the continued expansion of the telecommunications and information technology sector and tourism.

The MBC said the country failed to capitalize on the upbeat public mood following the ouster of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada in January as several domestic and external factors presented some difficulties for the economy.

This included the downturn in the electronics industry, the onset of the recession in the US and Japan, and the 35-percent decline in foreign direct investments in the first 8 months.

This was aggravated by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the US, which further raised the risks for a global recession.

In Congress, meanwhile, opposition legislators said the people did not share the "positive perception" of President Macapagal-Arroyo on the country's economic outlook as shown in the latest surveys.

Minority Leader Carlos Padilla said the Social Weather Stations' latest survey showed that "more and more people feel they are poorer than in previous years."

"What she is saying is not what is happening," he said in a phone interview.

In her yearend report which she presented on Thursday, Ms Macapagal said that the economy was back on track of sustainable development, with the government meeting all its 2001 targets, including low inflation, reduced unemployment and a stable exchange rate.

Padilla also said the President should also address the country's image problem abroad following the release of yet another survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit which showed that 63 percent believed the country was less attractive than the rest of Southeast Asia.

The militant Sanlakas of Southern Tagalog said the President and her economic managers were "illusionary" for declaring that the country's economy was doing fine.

Lourdes Monterey, Sanlakas spokesperson, said in a statement that the economic situation was "simply revolting, especially if taken in the context of the government's illusionary reading." *With reports from Christine Avendaño and Delfin T. Mallari Jr. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

A MEMBER of the 26th Marine Co. stands guard on a street in Rio Hondo, a predominantly Muslim community in Zamboanga City. Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu said the troops will not take a Christmas break while the problem with the Abu Sayyaf remains.
Dennis Sabangan

'Facilitator,' Roxas describes new job

BY GIL CABACUNGAN JR. AND CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO

TRADE Secretary Manuel Roxas II said yesterday he would only serve as a facilitator in the Malacañang committee that is overseeing Kirin International's $540 million buy-in into San Miguel Corp.

"I understand the nature of this assignment is to facilitate the transfer of information between Kirin and the Presidential Commission on Good Government," Roxas said. "It's not to make an assessment or review. I don't think that's part of my job."

Ultimately, he said, the decision on whether to support the Kirin deal should be made by the PCGG, which is the guardian of the government and the public interest in SMC.

Yesterday, Roxas oversaw the first dialogue between the government and Kirin officials.

The two-hour meeting in Malacañang was attended by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino Cruz Jr., Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo, PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac and PCGG Commissioners Ruben Carranza and Victoria Avena; Kirin COO Shigeki Ota, Kirin Southeast Asia chief Charles Ong, and Global Corp. Finance managing director Charles Martin and its local counsel from the Romulo, Mabanta law office.

The Kirin executives briefed the government officials on its investment plan. The local officials maintained, however, that their primary concern was the preservation and promotion of the rights of the small coconut farmers.

At the meeting, Roxas echoed President Macapagal-Arroyo's sentiment that Kirin's investment was a vote of confidence not only in San Miguel but in her administration and the Philippine economy.

Roxas' predecessor, however, came in for some brickbats, even after President Macapagal replaced him with Roxas on Thursday.

Camacho must explain his role in the government's turn-around favoring the Kirin investment in San Miguel, according to Rep. Carlos Padilla.

Padilla, House minority floor leader, said yesterday that while Camacho has been replaced as government overseer in the Kirin-SMC deal, there were questions he still had to answer.

President Macapagal-Arroyo replaced Camacho with Roxas after reports surfaced the finance secretary had tried to broker a deal between the two brewing giants when he was a private investment banker prior to joining the government.

"Was Camacho instrumental in the government's decision to push through with the deal?" Padilla said he wants to know.

"Was his recommendation sought by the Cabinet and the President on this?" he asked.

"If he made suggestions or gave advice, were they in the interest of the government or of the parties for whom Camacho was formerly working?" Padilla continued.

Padilla said he had been relieved to hear the government was inclined to go through the deal. But after he learned that Camacho had tried to broker a similar deal before, he said he started to doubt the finance secretary's "intentions."

"He has a lot of explaining to do," Padilla said in a phone interview. *With Cynthia D. Balana and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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Hostages' fate now up to God–GMA

BY Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has all but placed the fate of the American missionary couple, Martin and Gracia Burnham, and Filipino nurse Deborah Yap in the hands of God.

The President, who has ruled out ransom negotiations with the Abu Sayyaf bandit group holding the Burnhams, asked the country yesterday to continue praying for their freedom.

"(The) Lord's timing is perfect so let's have faith in Him. Let us just continue to pray for the remaining hostages. So long as we pray and do the right thing the Lord's timing is perfect," the President said.

The military said earlier it would rescue the hostages before Christmas.

The Burnhams have been held for almost seven months since they were kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf on May 27 with 18 others from the Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan.

Yap has been a hostage for more than six months. She was abducted with four others from the Jose Torres Hospital in Lamitan, Basilan in early June.

"I don't give deadlines but I have faith that they're (Military) doing the best they can under the circumstances," Ms Macapagal said.

All three hostages are reportedly in the custody of 50 terrorists under the command of Isnilon Hapilon.

Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu, the chief of the military's Southern Command, has repeatedly expressed confidence that the three would be rescued soon.

In Sumisip, Basilan, there will be no Christmas break for some 5,000 soldiers deployed in the military operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

Cimatu said that for as long as there are hostages to be freed, the soldiers, "including us officers will not take a Christmas break."

"We will be here during Christmas, to see that there'll be uninterrupted operations. We are enjoined to make this noble sacrifice," Cimatu told the government troops whom he visited on Thursday.

Cimatu said the safe recovery of the hostages before Dec. 24 would be "the best Christmas gift that we in the AFP could offer not only to the Filipino people and the US government but to the whole world."

With the sacrifice being made by the troops, Brig. Gen. Glicerio Sua, chief of Task Force Comet charged with going after the Abu Sayyaf, said he hoped the AFP would now get some respect.

"Soldiers are not asking to be loved. We only want to be respected and that's the best gift that we could ever get," Sua added.

Col. Roland Detabali, the Southcom operations officer, said a total of 35 soldiers have been killed and 100 wounded since the rescue mission started in May.

"We only ask for understanding, because we are doing our best, for ourselves and for the people," Cimatu said.

Two US defense officials are now in Zamboanga City to closely monitor the rescue operations in Basilan.

Cimatu said the US officials arrived on Tuesday to get fresh information on the operation.

"They are also under strict instructions to monitor and cooperate with the authorities, especially with the military," he added.

Cimatu refused to identify the US defense officials. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Restored 2002 budget on track

BY JULIET L. JAVELLANA

THE BICAMERAL conference committee on the national budget has agreed to fully restore the cuts made earlier to the proposed P780.8-billion outlay for 2002.

"It's OK now. We can approve the budget (today)," Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya, chair of the House appropriations committee, said yesterday.

"All the cuts have been restored," said House majority leader Neptali Gonzales II.

Andaya said the bicameral committee report on the General Appropriations Act of 2002 would be approved by its Senate and House members at noon today.

The reconciled budget measure would then be submitted for ratification to both houses of Congress during today's 4 p.m. session.

Andaya said a "responsible give and take" paved the way for the restoration of the P8.5 billion slashed by the Senate from the P780.8-billion measure approved by the House, where the budget bill originated.

Andaya said there was also a "substantial restoration" of the P10-billion modernization fund for the Armed Forces, which the Senate had cut.

The rest of the P10 billion was realigned to other programs.

Andaya said that on the first day the bicameral committee met, there was already an agreement in principle to restore the House version of the budget bill.

"As you can see even the House minority wanted this budget intact," Andaya said.

Andaya said there were no strong disagreements or differences during the bicameral conference, which is comprised of 14 senators and 14 congressmen.

"Even I was surprised at how easily both sides reached an agreement. It shows that both sides could work harmoniously for the national interest," Andaya said.

The mother bicam committee created a smaller panel that met Wednesday and Thursday to reconcile the two versions of the budget.

Andaya said the mother bicam would meet at noon today to approve the committee report.

Gonzales said the budget measure is on track and due for ratification in an unusual Saturday session.

Gonzales said the House is prepared to hold a session on Monday if necessary, but he is confident the budget would be ratified today.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said earlier the Senate and House members of the bicam had agreed to approve the budget not later than Dec. 24.

The President, he said, is expected to sign the budget into law by Dec. 28.

In the interim, De Venecia said the President is expected to prepare her veto message. Andaya said he had no idea what items the President would veto in the budget measure.

In Davao City, Philippine Air Force chief Gen. Benjamin Defensor said that at least half of the P20-billion budget being sought by the military for next year would go to the PAF.

Defensor told the INQUIRER that the Air Force has already decided how to spend the P10 billion.

"The first phase of expenditures would be for the upgrading and maintenance of existing aircraft, equipment and facilities," Defensor said. He said the military has allocated P5.4 billion for this.

Defensor said the other P4.6 billion would go to procure new aircraft and other needs of the PAF.

Defensor admitted the military budget will face rough sailing at the Senate but he was optimistic the senators would see its importance.

Defensor said that the country received recently a C-130 airplane from the United States, but since this was a refurbished aircraft, it would require more maintenance.

But with a fleet of new aircraft, Defensor said, the Air Force could enhance its ability to conduct air strikes and search, rescue and relief operations.

"Like cars, aircraft are efficient when new and are less costly to maintain," he said.

The Air Force chief also said, "We hope to buy one or two new C-130 aircraft, which could arrive next year," he said. *Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

OFW comes home to cash, prizes; HK Pinays not so lucky

BY NORMAN BORDADORA
AND BLANCHE S. RIVERA

LUCKY Dalisay Buenviaje, right, receives her P100,000 prize from President Macapagal-Arroyo who welcomed returning OFWs at the Naia yesterday. Looking on are Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas and Owwa Administrator Wilhelm Soriano. ROGER MARGALLO

RETURNING overseas Filipino worker Dalisay Buenviaje lived up to her surname yesterday when President Macapagal-Arroyo picked out her stub that won for her P100,000 in cash and P15,000 worth of appliances.

Buenviaje, whose name means "good voyage" in Spanish, had a rather fortunate homecoming as she led other OFWs who won prizes in the "Pamaskong Handog para sa OFWs," an 8-year-old project of the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration.

The future, however, continues to be uncertain for some 160,000 Filipino domestic helpers in Hong Kong after the labor department has so far failed to convince the Hong Kong government not to implement a plan to the slash workers' wages.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, who just returned from Hong Kong, said she did not go there to negotiate with the specially-administered region's authorities but to "present the country's position" against the planned wage cut.

"I still don't know what to do with the money. I'm shocked. I'm very excited," Buenviaje told reporters at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The 23-year-old Buenviaje is a nurse who had been working at Saudi Arabia's King Faizal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh for the past two years. She expects to return there after her contract is renewed.

"I am very happy. I will be with my family (this Christmas) and I also have P100,000. Thank you very much," Buenviaje said.

The President yesterday went to the Naia to welcome a group of returning OFWs from Saudi Arabia and Taiwan.

Other cash prize winners were Noel Rivera, a dental technician in Jeddah, who won the second prize of P50,000, and Maria Benitez, a domestic helper, who won the P20,000 third prize.

The presidential welcome was marred, however, by a lightning demonstration by the migrant workers' group Migrante at the airport arrival area.

Some 50 protesters, demanding that the government act to stop the planned wage cut in Hong Kong, suddenly unfurled streamers and posted slogans on the airport building's glass panels.

Sto. Tomas, who met with Hong Kong's Secretary for Education and Manpower Fanny Law the other day, said Hong Kong was "grateful (for) and appreciative" of the contributions of overseas Filipino workers, who are the prime providers of househelp in the territory.

But Law also stressed that the wage review was an annual activity and that discussions on wages were an "entirely internal matter," Sto. Tomas said.

"It's not like we're a big country that can interfere in their internal matters," Sto. Tomas said. "But we will know who our true friends are by the results of the wage review."

Sto. Tomas said she was assured only that the Hong Kong government would consider the country's position as well as the contributions of OFWs as "input" in the review.

Vic Cabe, the Philippine assistant labor attache for Hong Kong, said everything would depend on 4th quarter economic indicators.

He said the.indicators "did not decrease enough" to compel a wage cut, adding that the best the 160,000 Filipino maids in Hong Kong could hope for was a wage freeze.

Singaporean jailed for maid abuse

SINGAPORE—A Singapore woman who slapped and scratched her Filipino maid for buying the wrong brand of bread has been jailed for two months, a report said yesterday.

Chew Lee Cheng's imprisonment comes as the city state expressed growing concern at the maltreatment of foreign maids.

According to Ministry of Manpower figures, convictions for maid abuse have risen from four in 1997 to 39 last year, despite increased penalties.

Chief Justice Yong Pung How has said the violence was giving Singapore "a very terrible reputation."

Chew, 35, ordered her maid Beverly Dablo Go out of the house when she returned from a supermarket with the wrong brand of bread, the "Straits Times" report said.

The court was told that when Go stood on the doorway crying, Chew hauled her back inside where she proceeded to scratch the maid's neck and slap her in the face. *AFP*

Erap wants to make more visits to Rockwell

AMID security concerns raised by state prosecutors, former President Joseph Estrada wants to make seven more trips to his Makati eye doctor for post-operative checkups following his Dec. 16 cataract surgery.

Lawyers for the jailed ex-President asked the Sandiganbayan to let him return to the Asian Eye Institute, a private facility in the upscale Rockwell commercial center, today and on Dec. 24, 26, 28, 30 and Jan. 1 and 3 next year.

However, the request that was made in a motion filed late Thursday remained unacted upon by the Sandiganbayan as of 4 p.m. yesterday, the court's last working day of the year.

It remained to be seen if the anti-graft court's Third Division, which is hearing the plunder case against Estrada, would entertain the request during the Christmas break.

The motion was actually a detailed reprise of Estrada's Dec. 19 pleading that asked the court to allow him go to the AEI "every other day in the next two weeks." *Volt Contreras*

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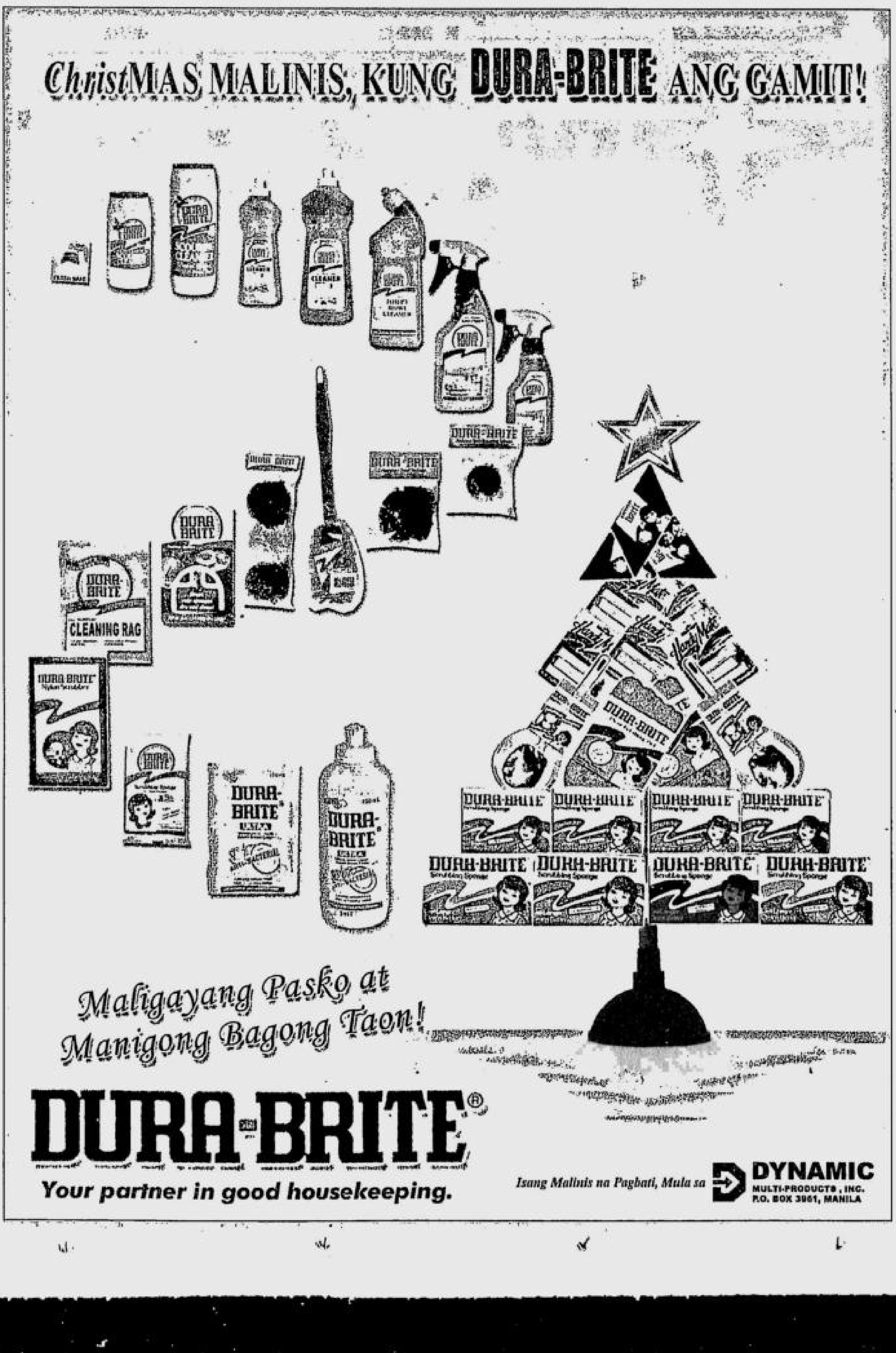

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DEALER OUTLETS:

KL, Jakarta want Misuari tried in RP

(From page A1)

night during a dinner in Malacañang.

"I welcome the consensus points and laud (the three officials) for their sense of common purpose," Ms Macapagal said during ceremonies marking the 66th anniversary of the Armed Forces.

In her speech, the President said the consensus points included a recognition of the progress made in the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement between the Philippine government and the Misuari-founded Moro National Liberation Front, of the need to sustain such progress for the good of Filipino Muslims.

She said it was also recognized that there was a need to "accept the realities on the ground," particularly the election of a new government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao headed by Dr. Parouk Hussin, Misuari's successor.

Hussin is also leader of the MNLF executive committee that replaced Misuari as MNLF chair.

Indonesia chairs the Committee of the Eight of the influential OIC, which brokered the 1996 peace agreement and is monitoring its implementation.

The President lauded the AFP for containing the Nov. 19 rebellion staged by Misuari's followers, which was believed aimed at derailing the Nov. 26 ARMM elections.

"You won that brief war handily, and now I ask you to help me win peace in that front," she said.

Inconsistent

According to the President, the other consensus points are that:

- The Nov. 19 attacks on military and police bases in Sulu by "misguided MNLF members" are "inconsistent with the 1996 peace agreement."
- The issue of Misuari's fate is "an internal affair" of the Philippines.
- Misuari will "soon be turned over" by the Malaysian government to Philippine authorities to face trial.
- The Philippines "recognizes the need to treat Misuari with the humanitarian consideration he deserves as a signatory to the 1996 peace accord, even as he will be subject to the judicial process."
- Secession or independence is "rejected" as a solution to the Mindanao problem.
- A "comprehensive solution" including political, economic and social reforms must be pursued "to resolve the grievances and aspirations of the Filipino Muslims."

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said Thursday night after the dinner in Malacañang that the Philippines would take Misuari back early in January.

He said in radio interviews yesterday that no specific date had been set but that "among friendly nations, it's not right to have deadlines."

Malaysian authorities earlier said they could hold Misuari only for 30 days. The ex-governor was arrested in Sabah on Nov. 24 and held for illegal entry.

Golez, however, said this date served only as a "guideline."

"What the Philippines wants will be followed," he said. "What we want is for Misuari to be repatriated as soon as possible."

He reiterated that the "most practical period" for Misuari's return was early January because of the ongoing holiday season.

Former President Fidel Ramos said Misuari should be made to answer for "his actions and pronouncements of the recent past under the rules of Philippine society."

"We cannot just ignore the bombardment of the 104th Brigade headquarters, which resulted in the deaths of many civilians as well as several soldiers," he said in an ambush interview.

Ramos added that Misuari should also answer allegations concerning his links with the Abu Sayyaf.

Wirajuda cited Misuari's "pivotal personal role" in the signing of the 1996 peace agreement that ended nearly three decades of Muslim insurgency in the South.

The two foreign ministers arrived Thursday in Manila.

After meeting with the President, Wirajuda said the Philippines expected Malaysia to deport Misuari to face trial here, but that officials promised to treat the ex-governor with "respect and dignity."

Syed Hamid said their visit was not meant "to negotiate for a third-country placement" for Misuari. He said the OIC wanted to know the Philippines' position in case a third country would take Misuari.

"There is an understanding between our two governments—anytime the Philippine government is ready to accept him, we will deport him accordingly," the Malaysian official said.

Agence France Presse quoted Syed Hamid as saying that Misuari, 60, was "well" and "very well taken care of."

He is not in jail but is "under custody" and is "not under the status of a refugee or a person seeking asylum insofar as Malaysia is concerned," Syed Hamid said.

Regarding the 1996 peace agreement, Wirajuda said: "There have been plus and minuses, but we recognize the progress of the implementation."

"We have to recognize that there's still a long way (to go), but you need to move forward," Syed Hamid added.

One leader

In Cotabato City, the MNLF and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which separated from it in 1978, have agreed in principle to push for one leader to represent them in the OIC.

Both groups are also asking the OIC to give recognition to the Bangsamoro people as a nation, and not only the revolutionary groups in Mindanao.

The OIC, where the MNLF holds observer status, still recognizes Misuari as representative of the Bangsamoro people.

Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF chief of political affairs, said it was insufficient for the MNLF or MILF to represent the Bangsamoro people.

"The MNLF, MILF and other revolutionary organizations may be disbanded," Jaafar said in explaining why the Moro people want OIC recognition. "Once (these groups are) gone, the Muslims in Southern Philippines will lose representation in the OIC."

To the observation that the Bangsamoro call for OIC recognition was short of calling for independence or secession, Jaafar said: "The Bangsamoro Nation is already there. It has long been existing..."

Asked how this call would affect the ongoing peace talks between the government and the MILF, Jaafar said there was no contradiction "because the call is democratic."

Asked whether the moves for unification meant that the Moro groups were preparing for war should the peace talks collapse, Jaafar quickly said: "We have been ready for peace (since) long ago. Who would desire peace in our homeland than we Mindanaoans?"

"The armed struggle is the last option. It is not the only option," he said, adding that both the MILF and the leaders of the two MNLF factions had been meeting regularly and trying to find means to unite for the good of the Bangsamoro people.

Salamat

MILF chair Salamat Hashim has expressed alarm over the way the government had been handling Misuari's case, according to MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu.

"It happened to the MNLF chair. It might happen to Chairman Salamat or to any MILF leader once a peace accord is forged between the government and the MILF," Kabalu told radio dxMS, adding:

"Simply, the MILF chair does not want to be in Misuari's shoes in the event a peace accord is completed between the government and the MILF."

Kabalu said the Philippine government must be extra careful in handling Misuari's case "because the Islamic world is closely watching, and the MILF is also watching." *With reports from Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Martin P. Marfil in Manila; AP; AFP*

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	COTRIMOXAZOLE (Bactrim) 400mg	13.50	2.80
	COTRIMOXAZOLE (Bactrim) 200mg	82.68	67.60
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ARGENTINA'S FALLEN LEADER

Candidate of change failed to deliver on promises

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—Fernando de la Rua cast himself as a candidate of change, a dull but steady hand to guide Argentina out of a recession after a decade under the flamboyant Carlos Menem.

It worked at first, with his approval rating topping 70 percent in December 1999. But De La Rua soon began to flounder on the national stage in a truncated term in office marked by indecisiveness, political stumbling and the multibillion-dollar debt crisis he inherited.

De La Rua's promises of prosperity and jobs fizzled, corruption continued unchecked, and the economy worsened. Two years after he took up the sash and scepter of the presidency, he resigned Thursday, driven from office by violent protests.

Now 64, De La Rua entered politics at 26 and became a senator at 35, in 1973. In 1996, he was elected mayor of Buenos Aires, where he turned the capital's 600 million budget deficit into a surplus and installed anti-corruption agencies.

An admittedly stodgy lawyer, De La Rua showed none of the flashiness of Menem, the Peronist Party leader whose last years in power were dogged by scandals involving his top aides.

Against that background, De La Rua made his sedate image an advantage. One campaign ad showed Menem in a Ferrari and De la Rua saying: "I'm going to end this party."

De La Rua rode to the presidency at the head of the Alliance coalition, a perpetually shaky union of his centrist Radical party and the leftist Frepaso movement of his vice president, Carlos Alvarez.

After a brief honeymoon, he hit hard times.

First came a Senate scandal, with allegations that government officials had bribed lawmakers to pass a key bill. Accusations that De la Rua was not confronting corruption snowballed, and Alvarez resigned in October 2000, accusing De La Rua of disregarding a "cancer" of corruption.

Meanwhile, the economy failed to pick up, and by March 2001, a desperate De la Rua fired two economy ministers in two weeks and turned to Menem's former miracle worker, Domingo Cavallo.

Cavallo could not muster a repeat performance, and both men's popularity plummeted as the government imposed austerity plans, cutting state salaries and pensions and hiking taxes.

In October, voters punished them by giving the opposition Peronists a bigger grip on Congress, and critics accused De La Rua of losing touch with Argentina's increasingly poor and angry populace.

As the anger boiled over his week, De la Rua made one last bid to build a government of "national unity," then wrote out his resignation and flew by helicopter from the rooftop of Government House as protesters looked on, cheering his departure. *AP*

Argentinian leader quits due to crisis

(From page A1)

cember 2003.

Argentina's caretaker president, Senate President Ramon Puerta, urged De la Rua's Cabinet to remain in office to avoid creating a power vacuum.

De la Rua's resignation came a day after he declared a state of emergency and shortly after the Peronists refused his call to join the government to confront a worsening crisis prompted by nearly four years of recession and an impending default on a $132-billion public debt.

RP spared

In Manila, President Macapagal-Arroyo said she is "thankful" the Philippines was spared from the fallout of Argentina's worst economic crisis.

She said Argentina's recession has not affected the local economy, although in the past Latin America's problems somehow affect the country.

"Well, I can just say that so far we should be thankful because their economic problems have not reached us," she told reporters at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday.

Ms Macapagal said the economy proved its resilience in the face of a global downturn by posting a 3.3-percent gross domestic product growth this year.

The Argentine Central Bank declared a bank holiday for Friday, saying financial institutions could only open to pay salaries and pensions for government workers.

Outside the presidential palace here, thousands of protesters celebrated as news of De la Rua's resignation spread. A helicopter carried the former president away from the palace.

'We will not bend'

"We will not bend. We will remain here until De la Rua goes away," said Ianina Ojeda, a nurse among the protesters gathered nearby, her eyes filled with tears from the effects of gas grenades thrown by police.

Authorities said at least 21 people have died, with hundreds injured, since street protests and looting across the country erupted Wednesday.

Protests were launched at government austerity policies designed to pull the country out of nearly four years of recession and enable it to meet payments on a $132-billion foreign debt.

The embattled Argentine president shook up his government after the resignation of Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo, whose free-market policies made him a lightning rod for government critics.

He divided the Economy Ministry in two, with the treasury, finance and revenue departments to be overseen by current Cabinet chief Chrystian Colombo and production overseen by presidential spokesperson Nicolas Gallo.

He also said he was prepared to accept proposals from the Peronists for changes to Argentina's economic policies as the country skidded toward default.

Among those proposals could be a devaluation of Argentina's currency, the peso, or dollarization, the pet cause of Peronist former president Carlos Menem.

"They come proposing modifications on exchange rates, and we are going to analyze them and make corresponding proposals to parliament," De la Rua said.

The president had previously ruled out any change in the country's currency policy as a solution to the crisis, saying one-to-one parity between the peso and the US dollar would continue.

Meanwhile, five more people died in clashes between protesters and police Thursday in the Argentine capital. All the victims have been shot to death in clashes with police or merchants defending their shops from mobs intent on smashing, burning and looting.

State of emergency

De la Rua late Wednesday declared a 30-day state of emergency, assuming special powers and suspending constitutional guarantees.

Thousands defied the decree and continued the protests Thursday. Police said more than 500 were arrested.

Argentina's largest labor union, the CGT, with 8 million members, called a general strike for 6 p.m. (5 a.m. Friday in Manila) through midnight Friday.

A main target of popular anger was Cavallo, considered the main proponent of economic austerity measures and the man who as economy minister 10 years ago under Menem pegged the peso to the dollar, stabilizing the nation against inflation but causing Argentina's exports to drop as the currency became overvalued.

The financial crisis deepened earlier this month when the International Monetary Fund delayed a crucial disbursement of $1.264 billion until the government imposed promised austerity measures and tax reforms.

Argentina made a last-minute payment Friday of part of the $1.1 billion required to avoid default but is still facing an uphill battle to meet payment deadlines later this month.

In Washington, the IMF said it was prepared to work with the new economic team in Argentina in the wake of Cavallo's resignation, with IMF spokesperson Thomas Dawson acknowledging Argentina's difficulties as it seeks to implement a sustainable economic program.

The United States pledged to continue support for Argentina, and urged all parties to work together to resolve the economic crisis.

"We encourage all Argentines to come together to find a solution that leads the country back to sustainable growth and prosperity," a state department official said.

"We have confidence in the strength of Argentine institutions . . . and we reiterate our confidence in Argentina's standing as one of the western hemisphere's leading democracies."

The disruption on the streets of Argentina had little effect on the stock market, where the leading MerVal index closed 17.48 percent higher as traders sought a hedge against the possible devaluation of the peso.

In New York, however, the investment bank JP Morgan warned investors that Argentina would likely declare default early next year. *AFP, AP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, December 22, 2001
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading:	**1 S 1:24-28**
Gospel:	**Lk 1:46-56**

Mary said:
"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit exults in God my savior!
He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness,
and people forever will call me blessed.
The Mighty One has done great things for me,
Holy is his Name!
From age to age his mercy extends to those who live in his presence.
He has acted with power and done wonders,
and scattered the proud with their plans.
He has put down the mighty from their thrones
and lifted up those who are downtrodden.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
He held out his hand to Israel, his servant,
for he remembered his mercy, even as he promised our fathers,
Abraham and his descendants forever."
Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months
and then returned home.

Commentary:

Upon reading today's Gospel the picture of a shy and innocent lass from Galilee disappears completely. The song that Luke puts in Mary's lips, explains that Jesus' birth is something more than miracle of a child being born to a virgin. The promise of salvation for Israel since many years back was made manifest through this child. The Messiah who will come to change the world, to topple the powerful from their throne and to exalt the humble. What the Almighty God did to Mary is no more than the beginning of a new era in history where people shall witness how God never abandons his children and always fulfills his promises.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

MERCANTILE LAW (CORPORATION LAW)—Limitation of corporation's power—A corporation, under the Corporation Code, has only such powers as are expressly granted to it by law and by its articles of incorporation, those which may be incidental to such conferred powers, those reasonably necessary to accomplish its purposes and those which may be incident to its existence. In the case at bar, the limit of the powers of petitioner as a corporation is very clear, it is categorically prohibited from "engaging in pawnbroking as defined under PD 114." Hence, in determining what constitutes pawnbrokerage, the relevant law to consider is PD 114. This reference to PD 114 is also in line with Article 2123 of the Civil Code. Indispensable therefore to the determination of whether or not petitioner had violated its articles of incorporation, was an inquiry by the SEC if petitioner was holding that the determination of whether petitioner violated PD 114 was merely incidental to the regulatory powers of the SEC, to see to it that a corporation does not go beyond the powers granted to it by its articles of incorporation. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Gonzaga-Reyes, Third Division, Pilipinas Loan Company, Inc. v. SEC, G.R. No. 104720, April 4, 2001]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

New survey says more Pinoys down on gov't . . .

MORE Filipinos have become dissatisfied with the Macapagal administration for failing to put an end to drug trafficking and corrupt tax collection, and to make peace with communist rebels, according to the findings of the latest Social Weather Station.

The survey, which covered the period from Nov. 3 to 21, showed the administration's net satisfaction rating declining on three issues: "reconciling with communist rebels," +7, down by 7 points from +14 in July; "campaigning against illegal drugs," +8, down by 10 points from +18 in June 1999; and "collecting taxes," -3, down by 7 points from +4 in July.

The survey also showed that more Filipinos feel the administration has not done enough to eradicate graft, bring down prices of basic commodities, prevent crimes against ordinary citizens, put an end to the Abu Sayyaf, and promote Muslim autonomy in Mindanao.

Compared to its Sept. 1-18 survey, the SWS said the administration continued to suffer from a negative net public satisfaction rating in most of these issues.

But the good news was that the number of those dissatisfied has declined, the SWS said.

The SWS said the administration's satisfaction rating in three issues improved from negative to positive.

These are: "reconciliation with Muslim rebels," +9, up by 22 points from -13; "ensuring affordable medicine," +5, up by 21 points from -16; and "promoting foreign investments," +6, up by 8 points from -2.

The administration continued to enjoy a positive rating in promoting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers, morality in public service, helping the poor, and developing livelihood opportunities. *Dona Pazzibugan*

. . . But high on Christmas customs

THEY are not called traditions for nothing.

Giving presents of food and gifts to godchildren and every family member, going to *simbang gabi* (dawn masses) and putting up holiday decorations remain the most observed customs during Christmas, according to the latest Social Weather Stations national survey which covered the period from Nov. 3 to 21.

Buying new clothes for oneself seems to be the first tradition to go during hard times with only 46 percent of respondents saying they usually do this, compared to last year's 67 percent.

Other customs that are not as established are hosting a family reunion (23 percent now from 41 percent last year) and dining out with family (28 percent now from 47 percent in 2000).

Putting up Christmas decorations, however, had the most "staying power" with a minimal decline from 75 percent last year to 71 percent now.

For half of the practices examined, those who say they will continue to do them outnumber those who said they would cut back on their spending or skip the custom altogether. These customs are going to *simbang gabi*, putting up decorations, giving food to neighbors, preparing special dishes, greeting relatives who are far away and attending parties. *Eline Santos*

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- Converse Lifestyle 2001 - Dec. 21 5:30 to 6:30pm
- Barbie Fashion Show - Dec. 22 2:30 to 5pm
- Galaxy and Universal Records Artists Musical Show - Dec. 22 8 to 10pm
Guest Artists: Rockstar 3, Logit Mizfitz, Chocolate Beef
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OPINION

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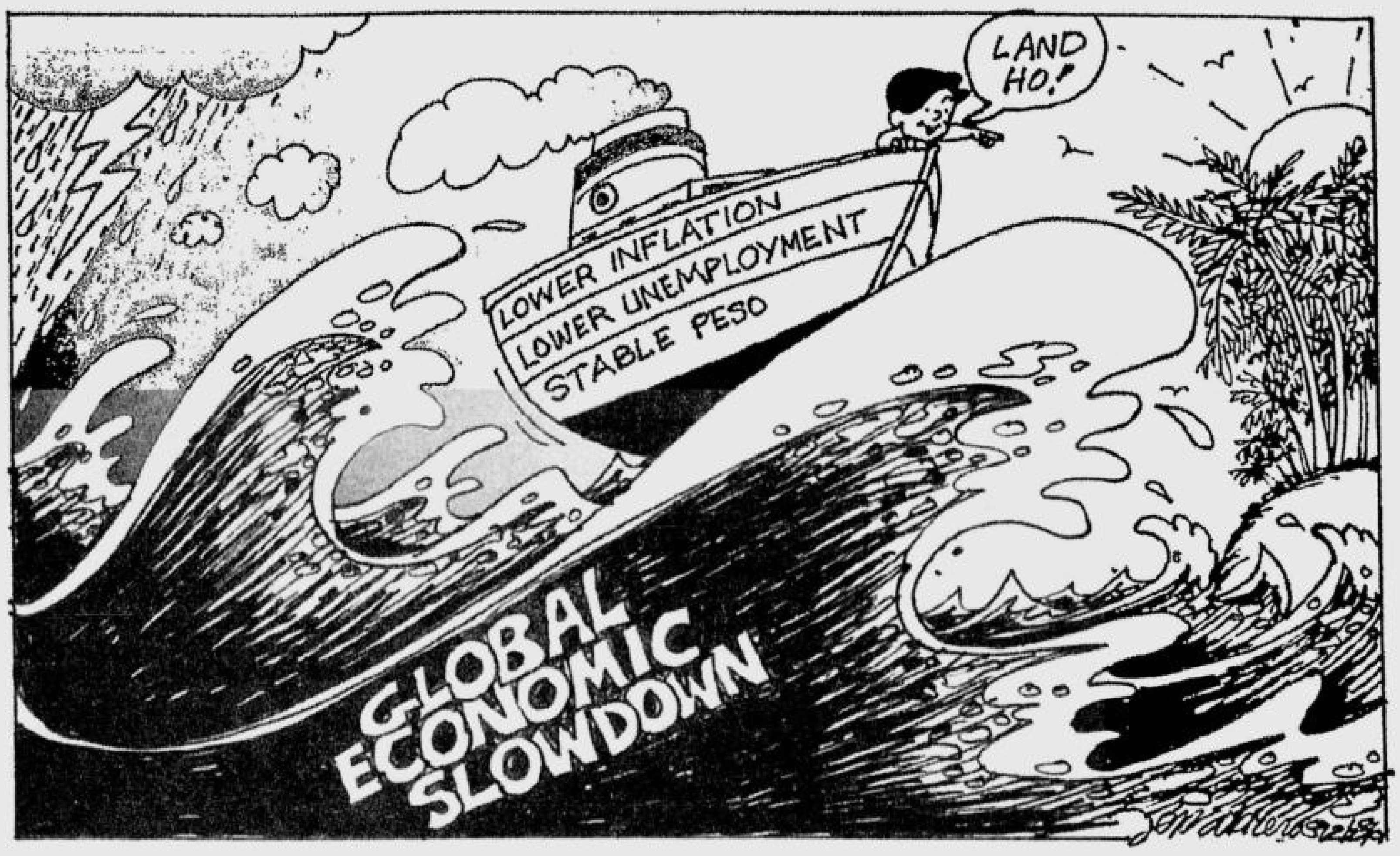

Earthly explanation

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo says she has heard a message from heaven. And the message is that it is time to give the coconut farmers what is their due after being compelled for almost 10 years during the Marcos dictatorship to pay a levy on their produce. So she wants to put up a P700-million price-support fund for coconut farmers who have been driven deeper into poverty by the very low prices of copra and other coconut products. The money is to be taken from the accumulated dividends from investments made with the use of the coconut levy funds such as the 27 percent stake in San Miguel Corp. whose ownership is being contested by the government and farmers' groups, on the one hand, and the Philippine Coconut Producers Federation (Cocofed), on the other.

As far as divine inspiration goes, that would hardly go into the books as an earth-shaking revelation. Basic justice demands that the farmers get back what had been taken from them by the government in the exercise of its power of taxation. Ferdinand Marcos tried to sweeten the imposition by saying the proceeds would be used to fund projects that would bring them untold bounties, but through some legal hocus-pocus he managed to make the money disappear into the pockets of favored cronies and transform them into private funds. After 15 years of litigation, it was only last Friday that the Supreme Court ruled that the proceeds from the levy were "prima facie public funds."

Curiously it was that court decision and the planned purchase of a 15-percent stake in SMC by Kirin Co. Ltd. that served as Ms Macapagal's inspiration. "The fact that they happened at the same time means that God is giving me a message," she said.

The less spiritually inclined would have a more earthly explanation. Someone made it happen. Someone like SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

In a country where there are no secrets, the word was out days before the Supreme Court announced its decision: Cojuangco and his Cocofed cohorts would lose the case involving the nature of the coconut levy collections. Such a legal setback could further loosen his already tenuous hold on the SMC chairmanship, especially since the five nominees of the deposed president, Joseph Estrada, could no longer serve on the board after January next year.

It was time to make a countermove. And what better move could there be than to conclude a deal that would bring in millions to a country that has seen foreign investments shrink progressively in the last year or two? The Kirin deal would mean an infusion of $540 million into SMC and a Philippine economy that is being passed over by foreign investors not only because of high labor costs but also because of rising criminality and political instability. A blockbuster deal like that could make even Cojuangco look like a hero in these dire economic times. Which is exactly how the administration seems to regard Cojuangco these days.

When told about the Cojuangco-Kirin deal, Ms Macapagal could hardly contain her elation. She said the agreement was "a shot in the arm of the Philippine economy" and demonstrated that the Philippines was back on the radar screen of international investors. Later she would describe the Kirin investment as "a seal of good housekeeping" for the Philippine government.

For bringing all these blessings, the administration is willing to let the SMC crown rest easy on Cojuangco's head. Ms Macapagal says she has no intention of replacing Cojuangco at the helm of SMC. Presidential Spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao makes it sound as if it were the most natural thing to have Cojuangco running the country's biggest food and beverage conglomerate, saying he owned the biggest block of SMC shares in private hands.

In fact the 20 percent stake Cojuangco claims for himself is also being contested by coconut farmers who believe those shares were also purchased with coco levy funds. But if these statements of administration officials are any indication, Cojuangco's position in SMC is secure.

Cojuangco may not even need a friendly government to keep his position, if the deal with Kirin pushes through. A so-called lock-up provision in the agreement requires Kirin and Cojuangco to vote as one block at least for the next five years. Which means Cojuangco is assured of five seats on the SMC board. These plus the three members picked by management will ensure that Cojuangco and Kirin can outvote the government any time.

Why is the administration eager to embrace Cojuangco? Is his continued stewardship the key to clinching the deal with Kirin? If Kirin is buying into SMC it must have seen some very sound fundamentals, and it couldn't just be Cojuangco's management skills no matter how formidable they may be. No one gambles $540 million on a single individual; certainly not a conservative Japanese company like Kirin.

Maybe Cojuangco is just one lucky guy. Or, as he has proven time and again, he is simply smarter than others.

Two justices

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

AS a former member of the Supreme Court, I am elated over its recent decision in the Cocofed Case in favor of the coconut farmers. It makes me proud again of having been on the highest court. As I stressed once, the obscure and lowly citizen can look up to it as his shield and armor and, more than that, his swift sword of retribution against the outrage to his rights.

The Cocofed Case has affirmed that role in upholding the claim of the Presidential Commission on Good Government that it has the right to vote the sequestered UCPB shares. These were acquired with coconut levy funds collected from the coconut farmers but later registered in the names of Eduardo Cojuangco and his confederates. The Court held the funds to be "*prima facie* public in character or, at the very least, affected with public interest" and conferred on their presumed beneficial owner the rights flowing from the *prima facie* fact of ownership.

It is not necessary to make a detailed discussion of the decision in this column because it has been adequately explained (and hailed or criticized) by many other commentators. Suffice it to say that the *ponencia* of Justice Artemio V. Panganiban is a well-reasoned and well-researched justification of the PCGG's claim as against the respondent's vigorous but in the end futile arguments to the contrary.

The only flaw I see in the majority opinion is Justice Panganiban's statement that the petition was "impressed with merit," a tired phrase in the Supreme Court lexicon that should have been retired long ago. It is like "at this point in time" that we in our tribunal hissed out earlier as an intolerable affectation. The *ponente* could have simply said that the petition was "meritorious" instead of trying to sound impressive himself.

That said, I shall now write in praise of Justice Panganiban. I believe he is one of the most competent members of the present Court whose judicial career is worth following. He writes in a clear and simple style despite his occasional lapses into clichés and organizes his thoughts according to a fixed pattern that I find too mechanical. He has offered this method as a guide to good judicial writing but judges need not follow it if they prefer to be freewheeling and original.

Justice Panganiban's opinions reflect a sharp intellect and a liberal outlook that poses a needed counterfoil to his many establishment-orientated colleagues. Early this year, he performed an activist if non-judicial role in the ouster of President Joseph Estrada and the ascension of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. He dissented at length when the Court upheld the death penalty and in the TELEBAP Case that affirmed the ownership of the airwaves by the state, where he vainly invoked freedom of expression.

While I do not always agree with him, I must admire his independence of mind. He is to me a kindred spirit. I was the first member of the reorganized Supreme Court appointed by President Corazon Aquino in 1986 to dissent against one of her official acts, with only Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez Jr. joining me. In another case, I held her designation of an acing chair of the Commission on Elections to be an unconstitutional intrusion. I also argued against the political ad ban as an invalid abridgment of free speech, but my colleagues outvoted me (and two others). We were later sustained with the repeal of that law.

It is one thing to vote on the strength of principles and justice and another to vote for political or personal reasons. By these criteria, I see a disappointing difference between Justice Panganiban and Justice Santiago M. Kapunan, who is also a cherished friend. I sense (but hope I am wrong) that the latter is moved more by emotional ties than the facts and the law of the cases before him.

Justice Kapunan was with me in the Third Division, which I chaired, and I found him a fair and thoughtful jurist. His modest manner is quite disarming, another contrast, by the way, with Justice Art. I congratulated Justice Santi in this column when he reversed a sitting colleague in the International School case and sustained the claim of the Filipino teachers for the same treatment given to the foreign teachers. He was at his best in analyzing and applying the Equal Protection Clause.

Going over some of his *ponencia*, however, I find a consistent sympathy for the discredited dictatorship ousted by Edsa I. It was Justice Kapunan who painstakingly justified Rep. Imelda Marcos' election against the claim of her lack of the required residence in Leyte. He was one of the justices who voted to reverse the decision of the Third Division affirming her conviction of graft by the Sandiganbayan. He wrote a separate concurrence to Justice Jose A.R. Melo's *ponencia* in favor of Mark Jimenez that was later reversed on reconsideration. Justice Kapunan dissented in the case upholding Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the new President, in the plunder case, and, now, also in the Cocofed Case, where he agreed with Justice Melo's principal dissent.

Estrada was a supporter of Ferdinand Marcos, as so were the 60 or so respondents in the Cocofed Case led by Cojuangco. Justice Kapunan and former Solicitor General Estelito Mendoza, erstwhile (or still present?) counsel of the Marcoses, Cojuangco and Estrada, are known to be close friends. Their respective spouses are or were business associates. Kapunan worked in the Solicitor General's Office under Mendoza.

I'm not making any accusations, merely voicing apprehensions. An unfailing support of the Marcoses and their tarnished allies suggests a mind-set that does not become "the cold neutrality of the impartial judge" who should look at both sides of a question before rendering an objective decision.

In my view, Justice Panganiban rendered an informed judgment with the support of nine of his colleagues. The majority justices were not swayed by the "hooting throng," as Justice Cardozo would put it, but by the facts and the law as they saw it. I do not question the right of the five other members to dissent although I cannot say I agree with their conclusions. I cannot pretend to fathom their motives, about which I shall say naught.

Growing according to target

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

"THERE, but for the grace of God, go we." That is the first thought that comes to mind regarding the collapse of the Argentine economy and the resulting economic, political and social chaos that that country is undergoing at this very moment. After all, it is not an exaggeration to say that this country was headed that way until fate, and the Filipinos, intervened.

Argentina's president voluntarily stepped down after the economic collapse in that country, and two days of violent demonstrations from people protesting austerity measures. Early this year, we forced the Philippine president to step down to avert an economic collapse. And it seems that this decision was a correct one.

Given what has been going on in the international scene, and in the light of the latest economic indicators, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo may be forgiven for boasting about the country's economic performance.

First, the Philippine economy has grown according to target (3.3 percent real GDP increase), belying the lower projections of the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and most of the country's think tanks and investment houses. This, in spite of the reduction in the country's exports, which heretofore had been responsible for most of the growth in the economy.

The country has also stayed within its inflation targets—last month's inflation, year-on-year, was only 5 percent. Moreover, the government deficit is within its self-imposed ceiling—which is considered an important indicator of the ability of the government to manage its finances, and is the subject of close scrutiny by creditors and potential investors alike.

True, a 3.3 percent growth rate is not large by Asian standards. But considering that neighboring countries have not performed as well (some even contracting) and considering that very many believed that the Philippines could not achieve even that low rate, in the first place, that is accomplishment enough. Even more important, at least as far as human development is concerned, is that the benefits of the country's economic growth seems to have been widely diffused.

The basis for the latter conclusion comes from the results of the latest (October 2001) labor force survey, which reflects the employment situation in the country.

Even as unemployment in other countries has been increasing (Argentina's unemployment rate is 25 percent), the latest figures show that our unemployment rate has gone down. It is noteworthy that working-age population increased by 1.3 million between October 2000 and October this year, our labor force—those of working age who are either working or looking for work—increased by 2.5 million. What this means is that people who before were not looking for work, are now actively hunting for jobs.

Certainly, that may mean that times may have gotten hard enough to force these people to look for jobs. But it also means that these people have hopes of finding employment, which contrasts with situations where times are considered so bad that people don't even bother looking for work, knowing that none can be found.

And, the figures show, while 2.45 million additional people who joined the labor force in the period, 2.31 million new jobs were created. True, the pool of the unemployed increased by 138,000 people. But because the labor force had also increased, the unemployment rate went down.

Whether the quality of employment increased is not clear. The percentage of those who are working, but are looking for additional work (possibly indicating a dissatisfaction with present income) decreased from 19.9 percent to 16.6 percent. But while the number of wage and salaried employees increased by one million, the percentage of the employed labor force who are wage and salaried decreased from 49.8 percent to 49 percent. Wage and salaried employment is generally considered to be of better quality than own account employment (which increased by 773,000), and unpaid family labor (where employment increased by 618,000).

Everything considered, one can not avoid the conclusion that the Macapagal administration has done all right by the country. What's more, it expects a growth rate next year of 4.5 percent, based partly on the assumption that the US economy will turn around by the first quarter of next year, and Philippine exports (particularly electronics) will start growing instead of contracting.

It is also encouraging to note that at long last, tourism's potential for the country's growth and development is being recognized where it counts: the President wants more money devoted to developing tourist spots. It is just frustrating that it took the report of a foreign consulting firm to accomplish what local economists and members of the travel and tourism industry could not.

And speaking of reports, perhaps studies by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington, on whose board I sit, will accomplish what local economists and poverty experts have been trying to do without much success: convince the government that the public expenditures which have the greatest effect on both growth and poverty reduction in the rural areas are those on education, roads and agricultural research and development.

Unfortunately, the government's budget, at least so far, doesn't reflect this important truth.

Investors to be convinced by adherence to the law

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SUCH is the power of the group of Eduardo Cojuangco in Congress and in the media that now the PCGG is being pictured as obstructing progress when it protested about having been kept in the dark by the five Estrada nominees in the San Miguel Corp. about the deal Cojuangco was forging with the Japanese beer firm Kirin. The PCGG is being portrayed as anti-progress and foreign investments, when it was merely doing its job in protecting the interests of the state and the millions of coconut farmers, against Cojuangco, who clearly has no patience for procedures where he does not call the shots. There is something so dreadfully wrong when for blowing the whistle on that Kirin deal the PCGG gets canned, while the five Estrada nominees, who remain in the SMC board because of sheer technicality, continued to serve the interests of their master, Cojuangco. The deadline for renominating them or replacing them was Jan. 20, the day Estrada left Malacañang; when the new administration tried to replace them, the *kapal muks* nominees hid behind that technicality.

* * *

There is also a campaign in the media to make it look like the SMC and the economy would collapse and investor confidence would be shaken if Cojuangco were replaced as chair and CEO of SMC. I submit that investor confidence would be boosted more by upholding the law and punishing those who trample upon it; it would also be boosted by leveling the playing field and upholding fair play for everyone, and erasing cronyism once and for all. It's hard to think that in this country that exports managerial ability to many other countries, Cojuangco is irreplaceable. There is nothing wrong with allowing him to continue staying at SMC's helm, as the President has indicated she wishes. But he should be made to play ball with the government, not the other way around.

* * *

Many years ago, at the height of all the talk about the dissipation of sequestered assets by the PCGG agents, I opined in this column that there was a basic mistake in giving the PCGG the twin function of sequestration and management of sequestered assets. The two jobs, I submitted, should never have been put in the same agency, that the management aspect should have been left to professional managers. All the malfeasances by PCGG agents were seized upon by Cojuangco's crony media to destroy the sequestration effort and dilute the purity of the PCGG's mission, *ibalik ang nakaw na yaman.*

But I also wrote that despite all this, it was still better to have the PCGG around to protect government's interests and the people's money. This is nowhere truer than today, when Cojuangco's group still runs roughshod over the latter with impunity, presenting it with a done deal on Kirin despite the presence of seven government representatives in the SMC board. Had the team of Haydee Yorac, Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo and Philippine Coconut Authority administrator Danilo Coronacion not raised hell, what would have happened? Yorac's team enhances the credibility of the Macapagal administration.

* * *

At Japanese Ambassador Yoshihisa Ara's reception to celebrate the Emperor's birthday, Leyte Rep. Aniceto Saludo narrated to this columnist an episode that, to him, indicates that Ms Macapagal listens. A group of congressmen decided to see her about the tremendous amount of rice being smuggled in various ports around the country. The President's first reaction to the smuggling was to confiscate the stocks amounting to about 500,000 sacks, sell them and donate the money to an orphanage and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. But the congressmen were afraid that she might be criticized by the opposition, as only non-essential commodities can be confiscated and donated; rice does not fall under this category. Representative Saludo asked the President to look into the legal angle carefully. Pretty soon, in their presence she called up Customs Commissioner Titus Villanueva and asked him to conduct a public bidding of the smuggled rice. The congressmen felt that if the bidding failed, then she could go ahead with the confiscation and donation.

* * *

If you're looking for a lovely way to celebrate the holidays, try listening to a musical cavalcade featuring classical artists tonight, Dec. 22, at the Stars of Giorgio Restaurant at Equitable and I Bank Building on Pasong Tamo Extension in Makati City. Dinner starts at 8 p.m. and the concert is at 9:15 p.m. Chola Colayco-Navarro, who admits to the "exquisite addiction" of the classics and who has made helping Filipino classical singers her mission in life, has put together a trio of top singers/performers: mezzo soprano Josephine Roces Chavez, tenor Jonathan Badon and veteran base baritone Chinggoy Alonso, who will render a program of nostalgia and Christmas cheer.

Among the numbers will be the "Drinking Song" from the "Student Prince"; "How to Handle a Woman" from "Camelot"; "I Dreamed the Dream" from "Les Misérables"; "Fallin" from "They're Playing our Song," as well as beloved Christmas numbers like "O Holy Night" and "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." Chola has also prepared another package for Saturday, Dec. 29, featuring Filipino classics and Yuletide carols, with Josephine Roces Chavez and baritone Bong Chavez. If this column is plugging Filipino classical singers, it's because I want to help promote our homegrown classical talents in a world swallowed up by pop music. Call Giorgio at 816-7520 and 816-0503.

* * *

Another batch of homegrown talents this column is helping this Christmas is the Jesuit Music Ministry, which has come up with interesting CDs that would make perfect Christmas gifts. One CD is titled "Matins—Christmas Chamber Music," which is the third in the series of Jesuit music for meditation. This CD contains traditional carols and familiar Jesuit Christmas hymns played with instruments of a chamber orchestra, such as the flute and cello, the bass and viola, the violin and guitar. Among the renowned composers featured are Fathers Eddie Hontiveros and Manoling Francisco and scholastic Arnel Aquino, as well as lay people Norman Agatep, Jandi Arboleda and Paulo Tirol.

Another gift suggestion from this ministry is the "Lauds Series," an album of five CDs of meditation music featuring mainly that of scholastic Aquino. Dubbed the "soundtrack of our souls" because they have accompanied many faithful through meditation and prayer, the first four in the "Lauds Series" feature recordings involving the flute, the guitar and other instruments of chamber music. The newest, "Lauds 5" features Aquino at the piano "praying" carols such as the Jesuit compositions like "Pasko Na" and "Noong Paskong Una," with the participation of a percussionist and a flutist. Among the other composers in this "Lauds 5" are Fathers Hontiveros and Francisco and lay people like Agatep, Arboleda and Prof. Onofre Pagsanghan. Inquiries may be made from Marilyn Uy at the Jesuit Communications, Tel. Nos. 426-5971 and 426-5926.

Our share of the garbage

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

EVERY Filipino generates between 0.3 and 0.7 kilos of garbage a day, depending on income levels. This translated to about 10 million tons of solid waste in 2000, which is expected to increase by 40 percent during the current decade.

About one-fourth of the total or 2.5 million tons of garbage a year is generated by Metro Manila, its garbage generation growing 4.5 percent annually in the last four years. Generally, says the "Philippines Environment Monitor 2001," a publication of the local World Bank office, "the greater a country's economic prosperity and the larger its urban population, the greater the amount of solid waste generated." Because Metro Manila is currently a major contributor to national GDP, it's to be expected that it would have the highest consumption rates and consequent waste generation. "Eventually, as the rest of the country develops, Metro Manila's share will begin to decline as other urban centers generate more waste."

So, would we have no choice but to live with garbage mounds as we march toward development and prosperity?

Not necessarily, says the Monitor. The passage of RA 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (ESWMA), "provides an integrated national framework for environmentally friendly solid waste management." But its implementing rules and regulations have yet to be finalized, and laws in this country, regardless of how well conceived and received they are, have a forlorn history of being honored more in the breach, if not ignored outright.

The Monitor cites 10 "key challenges" that it says the country needs to address to achieve the goals of the ESWMA. These are:

* * *

1. STRENGTHENING enforcement and providing better incentives. Lax enforcement of laws and rules covering garbage generation, disposal and processing has to be improved to make the ESWMA effective, while incentives are needed to convince households to reduce waste generation at source and improve the management of waste disposal facilities.

2. Building the capacity of national and local institutions. Capacity building for LGUs and barangays and improving strategic planning at all levels of government will be necessary.

3. Addressing the "Nimby" ("not in my backyard") syndrome. This has prevented the siting of solid waste management facilities and could be addressed through better awareness and consultation, and the demonstration of safe landfill practices.

4. Raising public awareness on the benefits of proper solid waste management. Support and participation of the people in solid waste management programs will be key to the successful implementation of the ESWMA.

5. Increasing expenditures on solid waste management. A back-of-the-envelope analysis indicates that the Philippines will need to spend an additional P150 billion (or $3 billion) over the next 10 years for solid waste management.

6. Mainstreaming the utilization of new funding sources and employing cost-effective approaches. New funding sources such as national government cost sharing; private sector participation; and user fees should be explored along with cost saving measures, such as shared facilities and producing power using landfill gas.

7. Obtaining reliable information for national, regional, and local planning. Without proper data, long-term planning decisions cannot be made.

8. Ensuring proper management of closed dumps and sanitary landfills. The environment and health risks of closed dumps and landfills will need to be minimized.

9. Protecting the vulnerable and under-served. This includes scavengers and poor communities.

10. Expanding coverage of infectious medical and hazardous waste treatment. Effective implementation of the law will require a concerted effort that focuses exclusively on the practicalities of establishing safe and effective disposal practices in the short and long term.

* * *

WE need only drive or walk through the streets of the metropolis to see (and smell) for ourselves the consequences of solid waste mismanagement. Indiscriminate dumping has serious implications on our health and safety. As the Monitor notes: "Waste can contaminate surface and groundwater supplies. In urban areas, solid waste clogs drains, creating stagnant water for insect breeding and floods during rainy seasons. Uncontrolled burning and improper incineration contributes significantly to urban air pollution. Greenhouse gases are generated from the decomposition of organic wastes in landfills, and untreated leachate pollutes surrounding soil and water bodies."

What's really amazing about the seeming helplessness of civil authorities to cope with the garbage crisis is that, for Metro Manila at least, it should be fairly easy to control garbage generation and disposal. The composition of Metro Manila waste, says the Monitor, is highly organic and recyclable. "Forty-nine percent of Metro Manila's municipal waste is biodegradable and includes large amounts of kitchen waste and to a lesser extent, garden waste." Composting thus holds out a lot of promise for cutting down waste generation significantly at source. There is also great potential for recycling, as 42 percent of Metro Manila waste is made of recyclable items such as paper, plastic and metal.

* * *

BUT the problem is that recycling opportunities are not fully harnessed. "In the Philippines, only a small portion of the solid waste is recycled or composted, despite the existence of a relatively large market for compost and used products made from recycled plastics, glass bottles, scrap paper and scrap metals," the Monitor notes.

There seems to be hope, though, as recycling efforts in Metro Manila are on the rise. In 1997, only six percent of solid waste was recycled in Metro Manila. By December last year, it increased to 13 percent "due to the concerted effort by Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and NGOs to promote waste segregation at the source, composting, and recycling."

As seasons go, this may well be the time of year during which households can be expected to generate the most garbage, what with both consumption and disposal levels rising as we party our way through the holidays. Not a bad New Year's resolution to shave as much as we can from our individual "share" of the garbage generated each day.

Life in the tropics

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

AN AMERICAN correspondent of the Associated Press in 1901, Edgar Bellaires renders a certain aspect of life in Manila at the turn of the century in his book, "As It Was In The Philippines." The best part of the day, he felt, was "that devoted to social life." It was a pleasure he wrote to get out of a hot sun, leave the office and go into some of the clubs where you could sit under the *punkah* drinking your lemonade or possibly something stronger.

There were apparently all sorts of clubs in Manila such as the French Club, the German Club, the Caledonian Club and the Press Club as well as athletic clubs and associations. There was even a baseball league to foster an interest in the game.

The Manila Club also known as the English Club, the oldest of the English-speaking clubs, played a prominent role for Americans at the time. Casino Español was certainly older but the Yankees may not have felt too welcome there at the time. The English Club occupied rented premises in Ermita in the Ynchausti residence and also had the Tiffin club in the Escolta where members could drop by for that most English of meals, the curry tiffin lunch. It also offered a first-class library.

After lunch, one saw rows and rows of members sitting under *punkahs* with their legs extended on the long, easy chairs "indulging in the tropical forty winks known as the siesta." Old timers believed that a man who took his siesta lasted twice as long as one who didn't (Isn't that what doctors are saying these days?).

One of the first clubs established by the Americans during their regime was the Army & Navy Club that has since passed into the hands of politicians and the Chinese (presumably the same thing that has happened to the Mehan Gardens). At the time, the building on the boulevard by William Parsons had not yet been constructed and Daniel Burnham was still four years away.

The Army & Navy, Bellaires says, "was the center of social life and twice a month there was a ladies dinner. Most of the members who were married did their entertaining in the club when there were 70 to a hundred guests, and double that would arrive to listen to a military concert.

The next club to appear in the horizon of Manila's social life was the University Club that had some 120 members. This was a distinctly civil club to differentiate it from the Army & Navy that was military. Gov. William Taft was its first president with Commissioner Luke Wright and Dr. Atkinson as vice presidents. Its quarters faced the Luneta on the Ermita side. In the evenings members would listen to the military band and twice a week ladies could be brought to attend afternoon tea in the long, front room. Twice a month on Mondays, during the so-called "winter" months, there was a musical tea.

Another club that came into existence was called the American Club. It had nearly a thousand members soon after it opened. Although no "social" qualifications were needed to join the club, you first had to be an American. (Now you can see how Club Filipino came into existence and all the other local ones.) Bellaires considered it a "democratic" sort of club, surely according to the definition of the word at the turn of the century. On American holidays there were receptions attended by civil and military governors and prominent speakers.

There were also dinner organizations; the most prominent one was the Monks of the Red Robe with a branch in China and now in Manila. This was confined to 40 members and did not include generals, bishops or governors in their board although these could be ordinary members if they wished.

Then you had a Beefsteak Club for the meat and potatoes men. I guess though it was limited to 20 members, all of whom had to tell a story or sing or do something entertaining after dinner. The menu was rather dull (for me anyway) and consisted mainly of beefsteak, vegetables, potatoes, apple pie and cheese and Welsh rabbit. (What! No pasta?) Liquors were confined to "ale, stout, porter, beer, whiskey and soda." There were neither French wines nor French dishes. For that, perhaps one had to be invited or be a member of the French Club.

A good deal of entertaining was done by "those who can afford it" like the Governor and Ms Taft as well as the Acting Governor and Ms Wright and General and Ms Chafee. There was understandably little social communication with Filipinos. The governor and the commissioners and other high officials would be invited to dinners or musicals at the homes of prominent Filipinos connected with government but that was as far as it went.

A favorite form of entertainment was the launch party where the guests would travel by launch or in boats towed by launches up the river to some place where they would have a dance or a picnic. Often, the Navy would play host entertaining on various flagships when they were in Cavite since the ships vied to outdo each other in giving parties. The big, commercial steamships also gave balls and receptions on board that the author claims was "an old Spanish custom."

Lastly, ladies were warned not to remain longer than two years in Manila or "suffer a loss of vitality, to recover which will require many years." (It is possible the advisory is still in effect since our lawmen take off after every session and most department heads attend as many conferences and trade fairs as they can get invited to.)

Finding my rhythm

YOUNGBLOOD

Daniel

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

ALONE in my room again, strumming my still shiny guitar…don't know how to play this instrument. I bought this because I wanted to learn. I even called several classes to inquire about schedules and fees. It has been four months—the guitar is barely used. I taught myself to play a few notes of some of my favorite love songs. I never did take those classes.

I have been coming home at 4 a.m., a regular time frame for the type of work I do. My mother says she can never get used to the irregularity of my time and lifestyle, but she has kept mum about nagging me to come home at decent hours. What she doesn't know is that I did not come from work today or the days before. I was busy with other more important things like finding what I want for myself—in my life…my rhythm.

Next year, on the first month, I'll be 30 years old. I don't want to start the year carrying my bag of insecurities, uncertainties, false pride and sadness because of lost love. I am rushing myself to finding my greatest treasure.

It's almost 2 a.m., I should be asleep but that too is something I have lost appetite for. I have lived almost a third of my life and I have considered this moment to be most crucial in determining who I will become and who I want to be in the future. Sleep sometimes delays the process and becomes a waste of time.

Others my age have become professionals in their own field, managers of banks, famous artists and owners of businesses. In their own personal stories they are either engaged to their partners, living with a partner, married with kids, single with kids, single living alone and single staying in their parents' house. I, on the other hand, can identify with the latter and have gauged my professional achievements to salary increases and the number of correct answers that can probably win me points in that popular game show, "The Weakest Link." Personally though, I don't think I am making enough progress!

Ironic it is when you are in the process of sifting your own values and you learn that what you have gathered all these years—every moment and feeling you experience—magnifies itself a hundred times so that you'll be forced to remember every minute of the course. That is what is happening to me now. There would be times when I wallow in a deep feeling of utter aloneness and that no matter how much I try to express my fears to friends—they do not seem to understand. I had a friend who did. "We can only win if we face our personal fears bravely alone," she said, and convincing myself of this fact is the first step I had to take. It wasn't easy. I am afraid of so many realities and have lived my life fighting my trivia wars alone. I didn't want to be alone anymore—but she battles her own war. We cannot be together on the same boat. Letting go of her friendship was a giant step I took. I hope I had done the right thing…of letting go…of losing. "In losing," she said, "we can gain. We open ourselves when we let go and allow good things to come in." I believe her in spite of the hurt I felt when she herself let go of me.

Rush, rush, rush! I rush myself to reading the newspaper every day, listening to the news, getting involved with office concerns, opening my ears to new things I have never heard before, sharpening my eyes and if I can, giving unbiased opinions to sensitive topics. Ha! The way to maturity is a winding road. I have not traveled far.

To me, age has become time measured with sand, and with each grain that falls we also slide inward—into ourselves. We look back, we reflect, we remember all that we did and try to weigh the good and the bad. Sometimes our scale leans toward what was most unfavorable in our younger years. It's all a matter of perspective. We view events in our lives the way we would want them to explain how we are today. We should not, however, allow regret passage while we sort ourselves. We should not regret anything we have done for at that moment it must have been right for us. "No regrets," says that friend. So for unfulfilled childhood dreams, for every adolescent growing pain, moments alone and a broken heart—I do not regret smiles, tears I cried and love given away. They may all come back in different forms and I will live them the way they should be—cycle by cycle.

I try to take little steps in learning to appreciate the little good things that come my way. I take it easy on myself. I breathe air when I wake up in the morning. I feel the cool breeze that reminds me of days gone by. I smell my mother's cooking—empanadas and baked fruitcakes later laid on the kitchen table. I remember my grandmother who used to sit by the *cabecera*. She would have been almost 90 today if she were alive. I look at my mother's eyes and look for her only sister's laughter. My Tita Imelda followed my grandma Mina a year later into the land of endless sleep. It's almost Christmas. We are a small family.

Finding my rhythm? It's in me and has never left my side. We all have rhythm. It is life within. The magic that gives spark to our eyes. There is no secret potion or other secret enchantments hidden for us to find. It may not be simple but we must try to open our mouths to hum a tune. Then we tap our feet to find that beat. We move our bodies to find our rhythm. Open our hearts—to sing our song! It's our freedom.

Daniel is in her late 20s and works with a major television network.

THEY SAID

Betrayal of trust

"That is the start of an unfolding story of betrayal of the public trust in San Miguel Corp. The coconut farmers, whose identities are not even known have been used first as pawns in the fight for ownership, and now for control."

—Sen. Joker Arroyo on the San Miguel Corp.-Kirin deal, which strengthened Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco's hold in the company

Might as well be in Boracay

"If you go through the injustice of incarceration and you find out that this father-and-son tandem is having some of the best treatment people can have, they might as well be in Boracay, for heaven's sake!"

—Film/stage director and once-jailed Plunder Watch convenor Behn Cervantes on medical privileges of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada and his son Jinggoy

Here to stay

"We are here, and we are here to stay."

—United States envoy James Dobbins said during the flag ceremony in Kabul, Afghanistan

Their time is up

"They cannot claim to represent government. We have already disowned them."

—Presidential Commission on Good Government Commissioner Ruben Carranza on ex-President Joseph Estrada's five nominees in San Miguel Corp.

Stopping the lies

"I don't know if Marcelo would still be able to lie when I take the witness stand."

—Presidential Adviser on Official Development Assistance Marita Jimenez on Pacifico Marcelo's allegations against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

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Investment for the young

PETER Xenos, a professor in demographic studies at the University of Hawaii's East-West Center says, "The youth bulge will bring down the country's economic growth because savings and investments will be used in providing for the young." Aren't these savings and investments for the young? Why else are millions of Filipino parents working overseas? They are striving to provide a better future for their children.

Singapore, Germany and other European countries are now importing workers from abroad with the Philippines being one of the primary sources of labor for these advanced countries. These countries' negative population growth, a direct result of their government's family planning policies, is now a problem because they are finding it difficult to recruit youthful laborers native to their countries. They do not have enough young people willing to take on "less attractive" jobs. Singapore has a program giving incentives to single young professionals to get married and have children. These "first world" countries are confronting a crisis with their aging populations and a dwindling supply of young people entering the labor force.

The dollar remittances of our millions of overseas workers are sustaining our present economy in the face of worldwide economic recession. For whom are these dollar remittances? These are investments for the young. Therefore, attributing our diminished economic growth to our large youth population is not logical.—**MA. CHRISTINA VILLEGAS DUMANCAS, 2 J. Cinco St., BF Resort Village, Las Piñas City**

Christmas is truly in the heart

THE THRONG of people who marched to church during the first Misa de Gallo on Dec. 16 has shown that the spirit of Christmas is very much alive among the faithful despite the crisis that the nation is undergoing.

People from all walks of life came in droves, the joy of the season very much alive in their faces. It proves that the Christmas spirit is in the heart, not in materialism or prosperity.

Sharing one tradition, they find happiness in faith and in peace that they seek in God's abode as they celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Savior.

For the sick, the best gift is relief from pain. For the troubled, it is peace of mind. For the neglected, it is simply care that they need for Christmas. Love of fellowmen is love of God. Let us not deny this gift to those who need it most.

The adage, "It is better to give than to receive" has never been out of fashion. It is not only forever relevant. It is divine. It upholds the goodwill preached by the Lord.

For sinners, it is a great act of contrition and penance to share their blessings with the less fortunate. The loot acquired can be transformed into a blessing when distributed to the needy.

Sharing the spirit of Christ's birth is, indeed, the best way of celebrating Christmas. Let us, thus, convey the goodwill and wish everyone a merry, merry Christmas and make Jesus truly happy.—**ALFRED L. JUNTILLA, president, The Environment and Livelihood Development Foundation**

LETTERS

No bargains at the 'ukay-ukay'

I WAS told that some of the best bargains could be found in Baguio's *"ukay-ukay."* So, last weekend I decided to go to the City of Pines with my family to do some shopping.

We went to this place at the back of Session Road but we were shocked to find out that the prices of the second-hand shoes and jackets were unbelievably high.

A pair of rubber shoes was just cleaned and the soles were about to fall off. The saleslady told us that we should consider the quality of the shoes. My God, what a reason.

So we changed venue and proceeded to the city market and went to the "axjs" as they called it. There, I had another heart attack, a pair of worn-out rubber sneakers was priced at P3,200, more than its actual cost in Manila. I really cannot understand how the city government of Baguio could allow these people to price their goods so high.

The city has so many *"ukay-ukay"* stores. A bit depressing for the so-called Summer Capital of the Philippines.

In the first place, I was told that they are not paying their taxes and you don't even get a receipt. Secondly, if later on you find out that the goods you purchased are damaged, you could not return them where you bought them. No return, no exchange, according to the saleslady. Are the elected officials of this city blind? However, other stores along Session Road are not that expensive but the places I mentioned are really terrible.

We left Baguio in dismay and agreed to do our Christmas shopping in Manila where you can purchase new shoes and jackets at a more reasonable price. Besides, that's the least we can do to help our ailing economy—**RODERICK PIMENTEL, New York, Cubao, Quezon City**

Palestinian-on-Palestinian violence looms

GAZA CITY—Warring among themselves, battered by heavy international pressure, Palestinians searched desperately for answers Thursday, after the fifth violent clash between their own security forces and people in less than three months.

Overnight, security forces charged the home of one of the founders of the radical Hamas movement, Abdul Aziz Al-Rantissi, only to find themselves in the midst of an angry crowd of his supporters.

Bursts of machine-gun fire rocked the pre-dawn hours and left at least seven Palestinians injured, including two police.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ned Parker

The ugly clash exposed the wounds opening in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat began quelling 15 months of anti-Israeli violence under the heavy shadow of Israel's military might.

"All the time we are warning if the Israelis and the international community push Arafat to more steps against these groups, it will automatically lead to civil war," a diplomatic source based in Gaza City told AFP, after the confrontation at Rantissi's house.

"The only thing that can avoid Palestinians doing so is a political solution, to let them feel they have gained something."

But Arafat has little to present to his people for his efforts to demonstrate to Israel, Washington and Europe of his commitment to a ceasefire.

"Do the people love Rantissi? No. They just don't like what the (Palestinian) Authority is doing," the source said.

"If Arafat is being criticized by Arabs and his own people, it will encourage Palestinian factions, even within Fatah, to go against him.

"At least, you have to give Arafat something to show to his people."

What Arafat won by cracking the whip in October and November were several US and British declarations in favor of a future Palestinian state, but even those hard-won gains have apparently been washed away in the violent deluge of the past month.

The first major clash between Arafat and the Islamists occurred early in October in Gaza City when police fought with university students demonstrating in favor of Islamic militant Osama bin Laden.

Three young students were shot dead in the melee, which was hailed in the West as proof of Arafat's mettle against radicals.

In November, in the West Bank city of Jenin, police fought an angry mob for two-straight days over the arrest of a member of Hamas' smaller counterpart Islamic Jihad.

At the beginning of December, events hit fever pitch when Hamas carried out two devastating suicide bombings in less than 24 hours in Israel, killing 26 people.

Arafat declared a state of emergency, which included the mass arrests of more than 180 Islamists, but his measures failed to appease Israel, whose warplanes bombed his security headquarters and knocked out his personal helicopters.

On Dec. 1, hours before the suicide bombings that rocked Israel, Palestinian security looked to please a US peace envoy then in the region by locking up a high-profile radical.

Security forces traded fire with Islamists in Gaza City when they attempted to jail Mohammed el-Hindi, an Islamic Jihad leader, who later turned himself in.

On Dec. 5, security forces battled again, this time with Hamas supporters stopping them from imposing house arrest on the group's spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. One Hamas supporter died of gunshot wounds.

"Arresting leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad is only aggravating conditions," a parliament member from the Gaza Strip, Jawad at-Tibi, told AFP.

"It is very difficult for people to accept the arrests with just hazy words offered by the Israelis."

Nonetheless, Arafat pressed on with his campaign to beat back radicals, at the very least to win US support, which disappeared with the December suicide bombings. Arafat has shut around 40 offices and social service organizations linked to Islamist groups.

A Jerusalem Media Communications Center poll showed this week that 70 percent of Palestinians oppose Arafat's ceasefire initiative, while Hamas' popularity stayed at 21 percent, only 4 percentage points less than Arafat's.

The center's director, Ghossan Khatib, warned that unless Israel gave Arafat some tangible rewards, the Palestinian territories would see greater violence within.

"I'm pessimistic," he said.

AFP

Free our children from debt

THE AMOUNT of debt that the national government has accumulated over the years is a nightmare for parents and would-be parents. Our children and our children's children still unborn have already staggering amounts of debt to pay generations from now. Payments for these debts will be automatically deducted from their future pay slips in the form of withholding taxes.

This is a glaring mismanagement of the public coffers. The national government is increasingly becoming predisposed to pass on to the next generation the payment for current expenditures. The pressure to contain the budget deficit, at the same time maintaining pork barrel funds, is manifested in the inclination of the government to resort to borrowings.

While Finance Secretary Lito Camacho is firm in his pronouncement that the national government will reduce borrowings for the years to come, it remains to be seen whether or not the government will find other means to support public expenditures. If indeed our finance officials will be able to contain borrowings and manage to increasingly slash the allocation for debt payments, then we have Santa Claus in our midst. The very future of our children is the greatest gift that the national government can give us.

Attached to the resolve to contain borrowings should be the commitment to provide for the necessary expenditures that will ensure that there are better days for our children. These include adequate funding to improve our education system. It should also include much needed infrastructure development and social services.

In order to do this, there must be other ways of beefing up our public coffers. How about looking at the other side of our t-account? Increasing revenue is still possible if only corruption and inefficiency in the collection of taxes will be significantly reduced.

There have been many references to the fact that corruption in the Bureau of Internal Revenue is rampant. An example is the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism's account of how taxmen share their loot. The BIR ranks at the top of the most corrupt government agencies. The lucrative practice of tax lawyers and accountants alone tells us of how prone to tax evasion our tax system is.

There are obvious solutions being proposed to our budget dilemma so what's keeping the government from acting on these proposals?

On Christmas, all I want is to wake up to a bright day and the best news—that our country is being cleansed of corruption and a bright future awaits our children.—**EVA ALIPARO, Diliman, Quezon City**

North Expressway traffic oddity

THE PHILIPPINE National Construction Corp.'s imaginative new traffic scheme—dubbed "Nemesis" by some, for North Expressway Motorist Eradication System—promises to be the most effective method yet for thinning traffic on our overcrowded escape route to the north. However, it has drawbacks.

The scheme consists of a short, 500-meter-long additional lane, to the left of the fast lane, opposite the crowded Bocaue and Meycauayan exits respectively. Unsuspecting motorists are lured into these lanes with brightly painted signs 300 m, 200 m and 100 m ahead of them indicating that the road is about to widen to three lanes. Eager to escape the crawling traffic, drivers accelerate into the new, left lane—and have just enough space to reach maximum legal speed before (surprise!) the lane runs out. Too late they realize the cunning of the PNCC: the lane to their right is full of cars, there are no more lanes to the left, and directly ahead is the concrete pylon of the exit overpass. At 100 kph and with nowhere to go, they're doomed.

And therein lies the rub. The scheme lacks—how shall I put it?—the necessary incentive to make this form of suicide attractive to the road-weary motorist. What's in it for him, he might well ask? To overcome this drawback to an otherwise excellent idea, I would like to offer a modest proposal:

- Make Nemesis voluntary. Instead of luring motorists with false promises of open highway ahead, label these lanes as "Dead Ends." Drivers will chuckle at the intended pun, and daredevils—who are the ones you really want to get rid of—will be challenged to take them.
- Introduce it as a competition, with a points system for participants, and prizes for the winners.
- Explain the options available when the road runs out, as follows:

a. Turn left across the central divider, for an attempt at a head-on collision with the opposite traffic flow. Score: 5 points for negotiating the tricky central drainage canal; 10 for making it to the other side; and 20 for any vehicles you take out once you get there.

b. Keep going straight through the orange cones (one point each) and try to take a bridge pylon with you for 15 points (suggestion: a light vehicle may not be sufficient for this option; participants should be advised to bring, say, a fully loaded gravel truck).

c. Follow the helpful white arrows painted at the end of the suicide lane and turn right to the side of whatever dozy vehicle happens to be occupying the space next to you—extra points for the type of vehicle you destroy, and 20 additional points for obeying traffic signs!

- And prizes? I suggest a special plot be reserved at the conveniently situated Eternal Gardens Memorial Park, with a plaque: "They gave their lives so others may have space to drive."

Alternatively, the PNCC could try repainting the lines on the road to make the present extra left lane into the continuation of the fast lane, and the fast lane next to it into the continuation of the slow lane. The present slow lane would then become the extra lane for exiting cars. Such a solution might seem pedestrian compared to Nemesis, but it would dramatically reduce the risk of involuntary suicide.—**PAUL HOLME, pgh@i-manila.com.ph**

Students protest revitalized UP curriculum

LAST Dec. 12, 2001, the University Council (UC) of the University of the Philippines in Diliman attended by about 350 tenured faculty members—approved the Revitalized General Education Program (RGEP). Despite clamor from students and junior faculty to junk the curricular overhaul, 248 neo-Thomasites outnumbered 105 anti-RGEP professors, decreeing for UP a more colonial and globalized education.

These new Thomasites deliberately ignored opposing views from the UP General Education Movement (UP GEM), an alliance of concerned students and faculty calling for a systematic and democratic review and revision of the existing UP General Education Program. Members of the UP GEM who were willing to engage the advocates of the RGEP in constructive debates during the said UC meeting were denigrated, to say the least. Instead of exercising critical thinking, with which UP prides itself, Thomasite Felipe Medalla from the UP School of Economics motioned for the division of the house, citing that "enough has been said and it's time to decide." This motion pushed into the periphery the real essence of the assembly. No venue other than the UC would be more apt to lengthily discuss the said proposal.

According to a trustworthy source (a faculty member, of course), some professors who attended the UC meeting were not even aware why they were summoned. Even more startling are attendees who did not have the slightest knowledge of the RGEP. Take for example this teacher who asked me: *"Ano ba ang pagbobotohan namin sa loob?* RGEP? *Ano 'yon?"* Didn't UP president Francisco Nemenzo and UP vice president for academic affairs Mariz Diokno, ringleaders of the RGEP, claim that there were extensive deliberations and consultations among the ranks of the faculty?

There were several professors who approached me to ask whether I have read the proposal. I was slighted with how these RGEP adherents belittle the ability of UP students to analytically and scientifically decide on issues. For the record, the University Student Council (USC) of UP Diliman believes that there are problems with the existing GE program but the RGEP is not the solution to these problems. Students and faculty were not consulted and enjoined in making these curricular changes. Issues such as nationalism and the Filipino language policy were consciously ignored.

The hasty approval of the RGEP shows how the Nemenzo administration maneuvers to get its policies and programs implemented without due consultation with the faculty and students. With 248 hands, UP education is destined to be bleak, to be void of nationalism and to speak the language of globalization. (This move to pattern the curriculum after the framework of globalization should not be a precedent for other universities.) Former UP president Salvador P. Lopez's dream of UP as a harbinger of social transformation is now relegated by these Thomasites as history. Neo-Thomasites killed "Tatak UP" and buried an education that should be liberal, liberative and transformative.

The perfidious USS Nemenzo is overloaded with anti-student and anti-people policies (and Thomasites, of course). A system-wide protest on the UP administration's disparaging of our rights and interests is imperative.—**MICHAEL FRANCIS C. ANDRADA, vice chair, University Student Council, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City**

PCGG will also study SMC-Kirin deal

IN THE DEC. 16, 2001 story headlined "No plan to oust Cojuangco as SMC head—Macapagal," a portion states that "(i)n a separate interview, PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza said 'we are willing to take a second look at Kirin and see if it will be good for the San Miguel franchise'."

I am aware that this portion of the INQUIRER story came from the Agence France Presse (AFP). The quote is erroneous. I did not say it. This should place in correct context the rest of the story. It states that "the PCGG would be looking at whether the deal was truly transparent, whether the government shares would be diluted and whether the deal with Kirin would transfer control of SMC to a block led by Cojuangco." The Presidential Commission on Good Government will study all its options, judicial and intra-corporate, in questioning the lack of transparency and the dilution of the coco levy-funded San Miguel Corp. shares. Most importantly, the PCGG will question the terms of the sale that give Cojuangco undue benefits as an SMC stockholder. SMC is not owned by Cojuangco, it is owned by all of its stockholders. When Cojuangco signed the agreement with Kirin, he did so not as a stockholder but as chair of SMC.

The shares sold to Kirin were unissued shares of SMC and not shares that Cojuangco claims to own. Yet, while it was SMC as a corporation that sold shares to Kirin, it is Cojuangco who will unduly benefit because the agreement appears to bind Kirin to vote exclusively with Cojuangco as a stockholder, for the next five years. Cojuangco appears to have placed his own interest as a stockholder over that of the corporation and the majority of its stockholders.

We will study whether this constitutes prohibited self-dealing and consider all our options between now and the scheduled Feb. 27, 2002 SMC special stockholders meeting.—**RUBEN CARRANZA, commissioner, Presidential Commission on Good Government, Philcomcen Bldg., Ortigas corner ADB Avenue, Pasig City**

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The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

UN okays peacekeepers for Kabul

FROM the rubble, babies–sixteen mothers who were pregnant on Sept. 11, and who lost their husbands in the attacks in New York and Washington, pose with their babies and ABC news anchor Diane Sawyer (second row C) in this handout photo taken Dec. 14. REUTERS

KABUL—US and Northern Alliance forces scoured caves and valleys for signs of still-elusive terror suspect Osama bin Laden, while fugitive al-Qaida fighters battled Pakistani troops after escaping across the border.

British commandos arrived on the ground in Afghanistan to spearhead an international security force mandated by the United Nations for a six-month deployment. The soldiers first assignment will be to safeguard Saturday's ceremonies inaugurating a new interim government.

And in the United States, exactly 100 days since terror strikes on New York and the Pentagon which killed more than 3,000 people, President George W. Bush announced stiff new measures designed to deprive two suspected terror groups in South Asia of their funding.

The UN Security Council Thursday authorized the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force to Kabul and surrounding areas, which will number several thousand British, French and other Nato troops.

The force, to be led by Britain for the first three months, is tasked with ensuring the proper functioning of Afghanistan's interim government, which will step into the vacuum left by the ouster of the Taliban, due to be installed on Saturday for six months.

The British daily The Independent reported Friday that British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said Italy, Spain, Canada and Jordan will be among the first countries to provide troops for the 5,000-strong force.

An advance party of 53 British Marines flew to Bagram airbase near Kabul Thursday to seed the 3,000-strong force, just hours before the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to authorize the troops' deployment.

The British contingent is due to swell to up to 1,500.

Company commander Major Matt Jones told reporters that the mission was "quite clear. It is security and assistance for the interim government. We're quite happy with that."

"It's a peace support operation for want of a better phrase. We will not be guarding any locations. We will be providing a presence."

Their mission is to provide security to the interim government to be headed by Pashtun tribal leader Hamid Karzai for six months.

A Loya Jirga—traditional grand assembly of elders—will then set up a transitional authority to rule the country for up to two years to be followed by elections.

US forces supporting Afghan troops continued to search the caves and tunnels of eastern Afghanistan for members of Bin Laden's al-Qaida network, Pentagon spokesperson Victoria Clarke said.

"Our primary objective remains to get the very senior, very top al-Qaida and Taliban leadership, and we want to work very systematically through those tunnels and caves to see what we can find," she said. *AFP*

Bush freezes assets of 2 groups

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush on Thursday marked the 100th day since the Sept. 11 terror strikes by calling on allies to freeze assets of two South Asian organizations he accused of supporting terrorism.

"I know we've accomplished a lot so far, and we've got a lot more to do" in the fight against terrorism, he said in the White House Rose Garden, flanked by US Secretary of State Colin Powell and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill.

Bush said he was freezing assets of the Pakistani group Umma Tameer-e-Nau (UTN), which he charged had provided nuclear arms data to suspected terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden, and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), one of two militant groups India blames for last week's bloody attack on its parliament.

"LET is a stateless sponsor of terrorism, and it hopes to destroy relations between Pakistan and India and undermine" Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, said the US leader.

"To achieve its purpose, LET has committed acts of terrorism inside both India and Pakistan. I look forward to working with the governments of both India and Pakistan in a common effort to shut it down, and to bring the killers to justice," the President declared.

Bush said UTN was founded by a former official of Pakistan's atomic energy commission and, while masked in "the disguise of charity," had abetted Bin Laden's quest for weapons of mass destruction.

"UTN claims to serve the hungry and needy of Afghanistan, but it was the UTN that provided information about nuclear weapons to al-Qaida," alleged the President, whose order also covers three UTN directors.

The White House said in a fact sheet that Thursday's action brought to 158 the number of individuals and organizations whose assets are to be frozen under a presidential directive first issued Sept. 23.

Earlier, the White House released a progress report on the US-led "war on terrorism" that said the United States had frozen assets totaling $33 million, while 142 other nations froze an equal amount.

"With the help of freedom-loving countries around the world, we will do much more to rid the world of evil and of terrorists," Bush said. *AFP*

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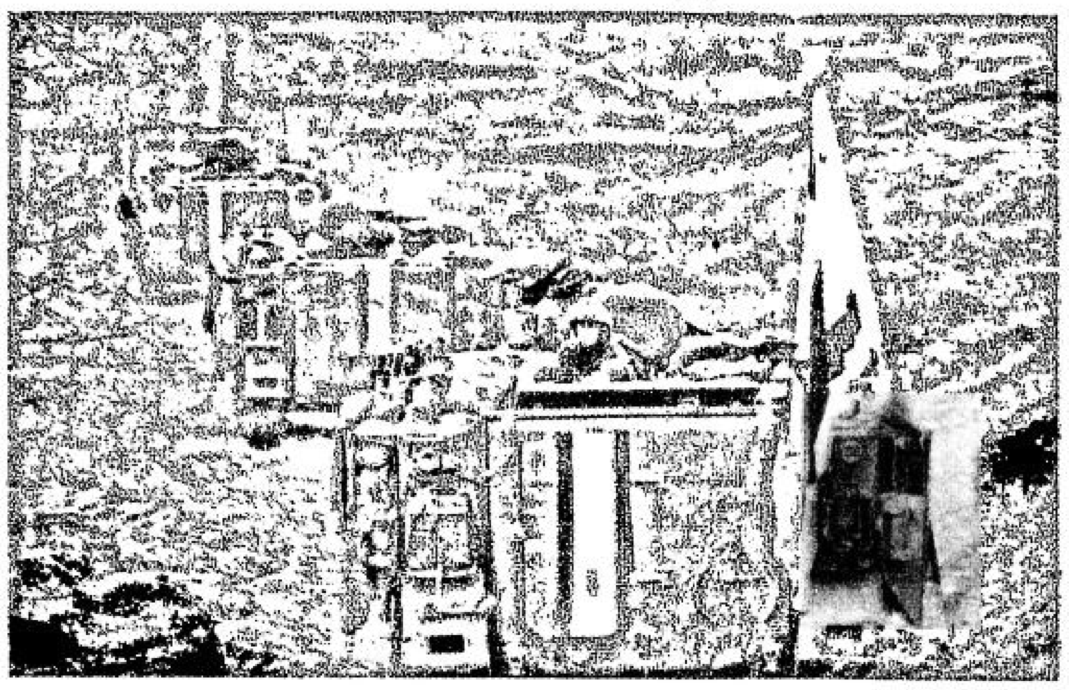
Palestinian police, Hamas militants clash



ISRAELI armored personal carriers move out of the West Bank city of Nablus Dec. 20. Israel on Wednesday offered to loosen its military grip on Nablus, the biggest Palestinian city in the West Bank. REUTERS

GAZA CITY—Palestinian security forces swooped down on radical Islamic militants preparing to launch a mortar attack in the north of the Gaza Strip late Thursday, sparking gunbattles which left a teenager dead and 25 other people wounded.

A rare calm in the Palestinian territories was shattered just hours before when another Palestinian was killed in a firefight with Israeli forces as they moved back into a suburb of Nablus in the West Bank from where they had withdrawn earlier in the day, according to Palestinian officials.

In the Jabaliya refugee area north of Gaza City, where police have recently stepped up pressure against militant groups such as Hamas, Mahmud Abdel Rahman Alemkayad, 17, was killed in crossfire between security forces and militants.

A first gunbattle erupted in the area when Palestinian security forces prevented Hamas militants from launching a mortar attack. Five members of the Hamas military wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, were arrested and another five members of the security forces were wounded, one seriously, in the clash.

A short time later, a convoy of Hamas supporters stormed the scene and threw rocks and opened fire on the security forces and police as they tried to bring the arrested militants to a nearby police station.

Alemkayad was caught in the crossfire, but hospital officials said it was unclear whether he was killed by the security forces or the militants. Another 20 people were wounded in the attempt to free the arrested militants, according to security sources.

It was first time that clashes have erupted while Palestinian security forces have prevented Islamic militants from launching a mortar attack. The attacks, which generally target nearby Jewish settlements, have recently sparked heavy military responses from Israel, including air strikes and tank incursions.

The attempted mortar attack also marked the first military action by Hamas since Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Dec 16 demanded an end to all armed operations against Israel.

Just hours earlier, Israeli tanks and armored cars moved back into an autonomous Palestinian area of west Nablus they had quit in the morning. However, the Army said the movement had been a "tactical change" and not an official withdrawal.

Tanks also returned to a West Bank village evacuated hours earlier.

The withdrawal had been seen as a sign that the security situation had improved slightly after a dramatic drop in violence following Arafat's peace call on Sunday.

The beleaguered Palestinian leader, who is surrounded in a compound in the West Bank town of Ramallah and under virtual house arrest, also received a diplomatic boost from Arab foreign ministers meeting in Cairo on Thursday.

Foreign ministers and other representatives of the 22 states of the Arab League expressed their "support" for his decision to call for a halt to armed operations against Israel. *AFP*

Haiti coup plotter sings

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—An ex-soldier has admitted he attacked Haiti's National Palace in a coup attempt, saying the conspirators also included a former Army colonel and two former police chiefs who fled the country as suspects in a previous coup plot.

Former Sgt. Pierre Richardson was captured Thursday with a bullet wound in his leg after Monday's assault on the presidential palace. Richardson was stopped on a highway to the neighboring Dominican Republic, police said.

Richardson, the only palace attacker caught so far, spoke a day after one of those he implicated, former Col. Guy Francois, was arrested and accused of helping plan the assault.

When police presented Richardson to reporters at a police station Thursday, he said there were 23 or 24 attackers who stormed the palace in an attempt to oust President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was unharmed.

"It was a coup d'etat," Richardson said. "The plan was to enter the National Palace."

Richardson stood as he spoke at the news conference and then limped away when finished. Francois also appeared at the news conference, but was led away by police before he could speak.

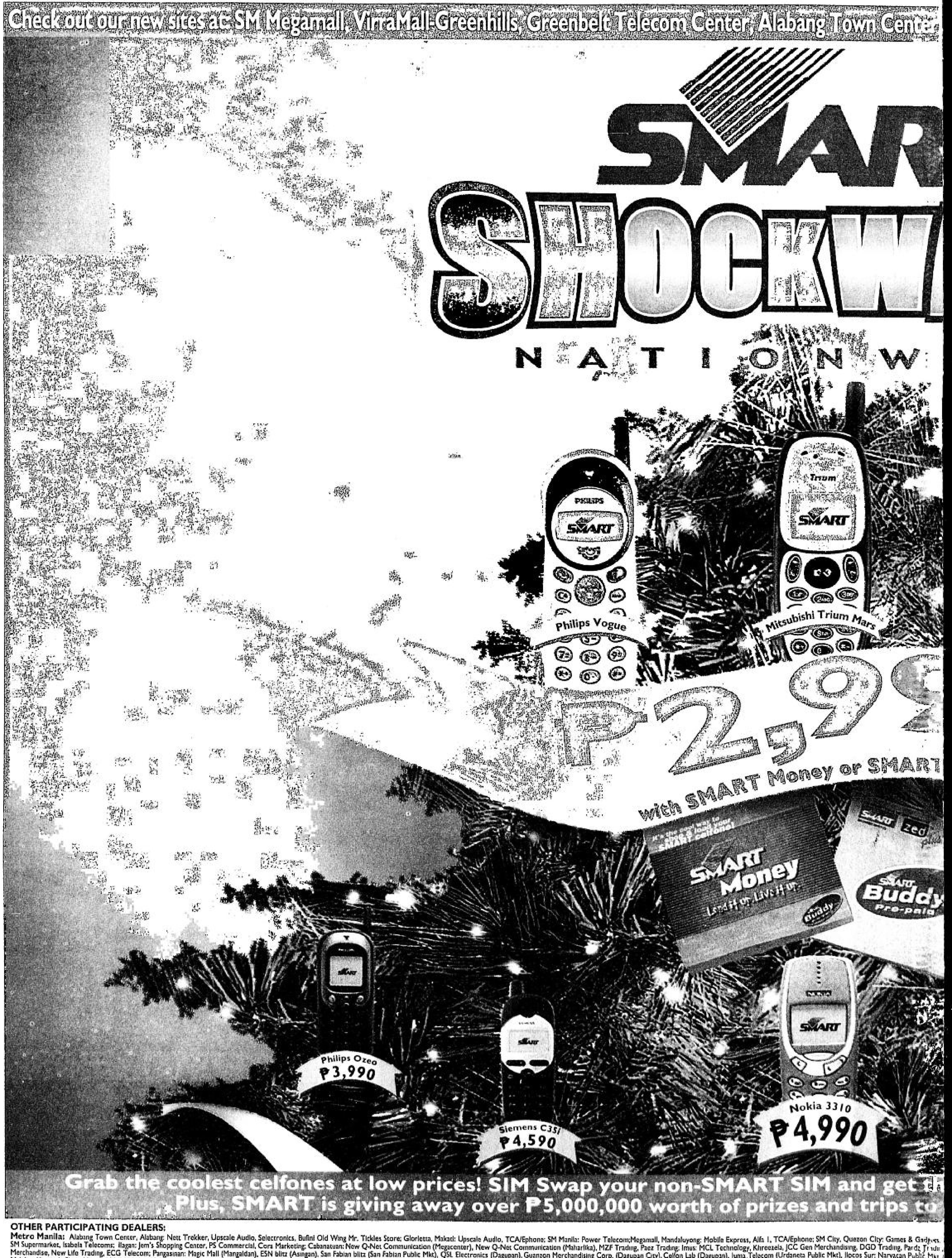
Richardson's comments contradicted the accusations of opposition leaders, who claimed the government staged the attack as a pretext to crack down on dissent. After police retook the palace, Aristide supporters sought vengeance, burning offices and homes of opposition leaders.

Attack

Richardson said he attended meetings in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo to plan the attack. He said two who fled to Dominican Republic last year after being accused in a coup plot also were present: former police chief Guy Philippe of the northern city of Cap-Haitien, and former police chief Jean-Jacques Nau of Delmas, just outside Port-au-Prince.

"Guy Philippe told us that former Col. Guy Francois would organize a backup for us in Haiti," Richardson said. But when the group began the attack, no backup force materialized, he said.

Philippe has denied involvement. In October 2000, he sought refuge in Dominican Republic along with seven others accused of plotting a coup. He later moved to Ecuador, but he flew back to Dominican Republic two weeks before Monday's assault, Dominican officials said. *AP*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India refuses to share evidence with Pakistan

NEW DELHI—India toughened its line on Pakistan Thursday, ruling out a leaders' summit next month and refusing to share evidence with Islamabad of a deadly attack on parliament it says was instigated by Pakistani intelligence.

Tensions were ratcheted up after hundreds of Indian tanks were seen rumbling toward the border with Pakistan and Indian troops allegedly shelled civilians in Pakistani Kashmir.

Despite US appeals, India said it would not share evidence with Pakistan that last week's attack in which 14 people were killed was carried out by two Pakistan-based Islamic militant groups at the behest of Pakistani military intelligence.

"We are going ahead to share this evidence only with our friends and partners who are united in their determination to fight terrorism," foreign ministry spokesperson Nirupama Rao said.

Islamabad has strongly denied any involvement in the Dec. 13 attack and offered to carry out a joint investigation with India into the incident.

Rao said that because of Pakistan's "unresponsiveness in taking action against terrorist groups operating from its soil against India," Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee would not hold talks next month with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of a regional summit in Nepal.

She said incidents such as the parliament attack "are not propitious to create the right climate for dialogue."

The Pakistan government condemned India's refusal to share evidence and blamed New Delhi's intransigence for increasing tensions between the two rivals.

"We regret this attitude which is not conducive to the reduction of tension in the region and the promotion of understanding, peace and harmony," the spokesperson said.

"Pakistan has responded from day one on Dec. 13 at the highest level condemning this event."

"We have said that Pakistan would also welcome a UN sponsored investigation into the incident which has been turned down by India.

"So the unresponsive attitude is from their side. But if they do not want this meeting (at the South Asian Association Regional Cooperation summit) so be it. We will only be willing to meet if there is reciprocity of intent. Pakistan cannot do it on its own."

There had been hopes that Vajpayee and Musharraf might meet on the margins of the SAARC summit being held in the Nepalese capital Katmandu from Jan. 4 to 6.

The two leaders have not met since a July summit in the Indian city of Agra that ended in deadlock largely due to the countries' dispute over Kashmir.

Rao said Vajpayee still planned to travel to Katmandu but would focus on "SAARC-related matters only."

Rao said Pakistan's first responsibility was to comply with India's formal diplomatic demand for the arrest of leaders of the two militant groups allegedly behind the parliament attack—Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad—and to seize their assets. *AFP*

PROTECTED HERITAGE REUTERS

A cat sunbathes at the Roman temples of Torre Argentina in Rome, Dec. 20. Thousands of cats who have made their home in the nooks and crannies of Rome's famed columns are now as protected as their surroundings after Rome's council has nominated the 150 cats as a part of the city's historical heritage.

Defector: Iraq keeps big chem'l arsenal

SYDNEY—An Iraqi chemical engineer who claims he worked in President Saddam Hussein's military plants for nine years has produced documents in Australia showing Iraq has a huge arsenal of chemical and biological weapons.

The man, a Kurd who wants to emigrate to Australia, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) he was a contractor to the military industry organization from 1992, working on sealing top secret factories and bunkers to prevent escape of chemical and bacterial agents.

Among the documents are detailed diagrams of 150 secret military projects, showing exact locations of sites used to produce weapons and missiles to deliver them.

The Iraqi, who was not identified, pinpointed hundreds of plants and provided detailed information.

He told ABC radio he was eventually arrested and tortured for six months earlier this year before bribing guards to escape and now wants to move to Adelaide to live with family members.

Authentic

The documents have been shown to Australian diplomat Richard Butler the former chief UN weapons inspector in Iraq, who said he believes they are authentic.

Butler, who is based in New York, said there was a real chance that Iraq was back in the business of producing weapons.

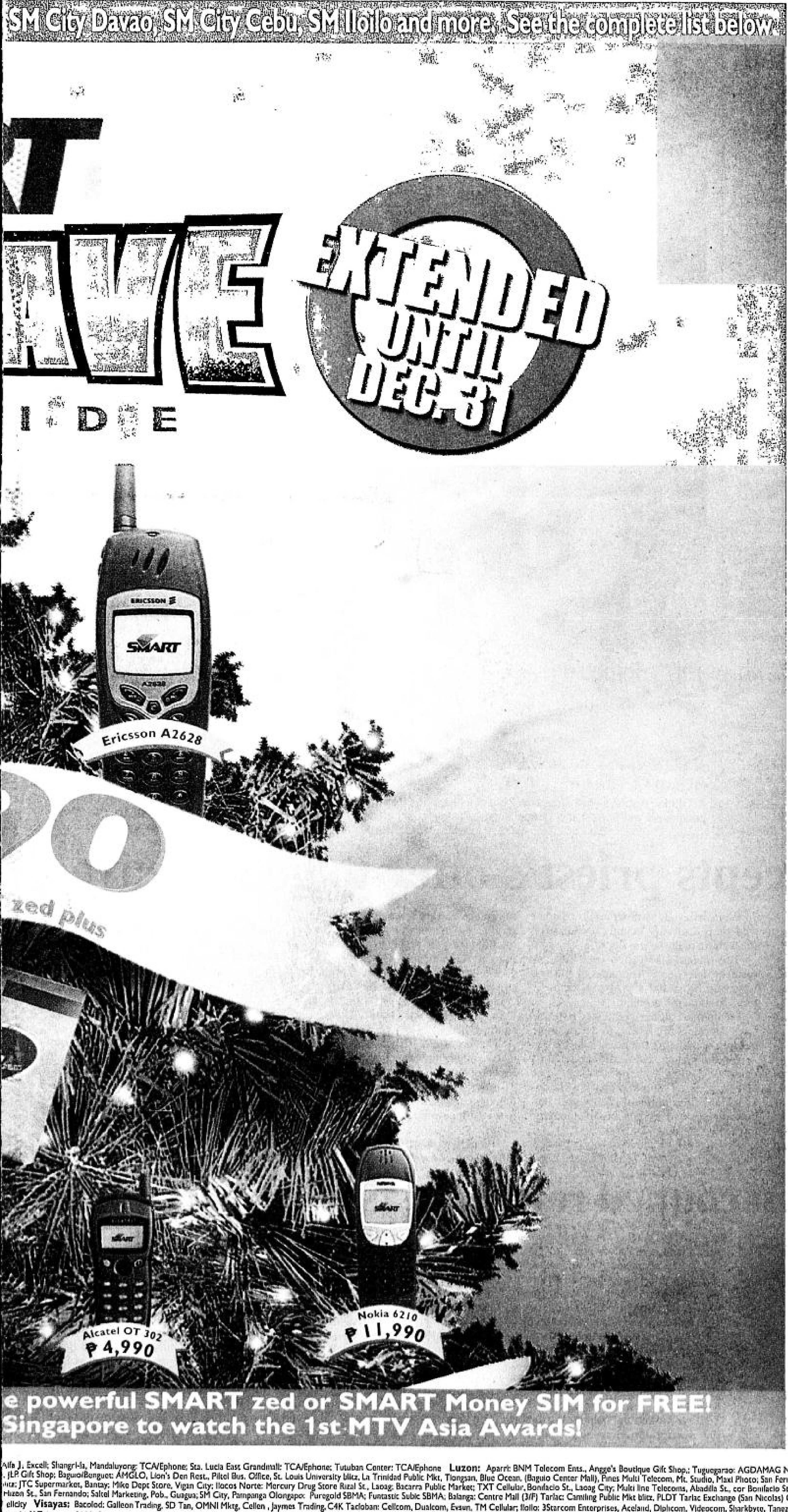
"I've read a lot of such reports from defectors, from people who have left Iraq, I can't tell you how many, and you get a feel for them," Butler told the ABC.

"And as I read what he said I thought my goodness this has a real ring of authenticity about it—just the detail, the names of places, the sorts of stuff he was discussing.

"I thought this is true."

Butler said documentation of the 150 secret military projects, included diagrams of exact locations of sites used to produce weapons and missiles to deliver them.

"Reports like that of this guy and other defectors suggests to us quite strongly that they're back in business," said Butler, who along with his weapons inspection team was thrown out by Iraq in 1998. *AFP*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Kidnappers abandon woman trader

By Edwin Fernandez
and Charlie Señase
PDI Mindanao Bureau
with a report from AP

COTABATO CITY—A woman trader, who was abducted in Libungan, Cotabato by suspected members of the Pentagon on Nov. 4, was finally reunited with her family yesterday.

Senior Supt. Bartolome Baluyot, Central Mindanao police chief, said Martina Martin, 33, was rescued around 3:30 a.m. during police and military operations against the kidnapping group in Barangay Simsiman, Pigcawayan town, also in the said province.

Baluyot said authorities managed to pinpoint the kidnap gang's location after four members of the gang, who were arrested earlier in Maguindanao, squealed.

"One of them (arrested suspects) pinpointed the victim and her captors' exact location, so we were able to hit the nail on its head," he told Church-run radio station dxMS.

Baluyot said as soon as the location of the kidnappers, led by Mayangkang Saguile, was determined, a joint police and military operation was launched.

Silvino Cinches, a senior official of the National Bureau of Investigation here, said the kidnappers were forced to loosen their grip on Martin because of pressure from the operating team.

"There was pressure, forcing the kidnappers to abandon their hostage, while the police and military forces were hot on them," Cinches said.

Supt. Abelardo Villacorta, Central Mindanao police intelligence chief, said no firefight ensued between Saguile's group and the government forces.

Martin Martin, the victim's father, expressed surprise when the media sought his comment as early as 7 a.m. yesterday.

Mr. Martin said the family had no inkling that Martina was already free until after he was contacted for comment.

As soon as he received the news, Mr. Martin rushed to the headquarters of the 603rd Brigade in Pigkalagan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, where his daughter was being "debriefed."

It was only after a few hours that he was able to see his daughter.

Mr. Martin said his family wishes to thank those who have worked hard to send Martina back.

"We are very happy that she's finally home. Thank you, thank you all," he said in the vernacular.

Martin was kidnapped from her rice mill. Her rescue came after police on Wednesday arrested four men in separate cases of kidnapping and bank robbery in nearby Sultan Kudarat town.

The arrested men, who had links to the Pentagon group, revealed the location of the kidnap victim, Baluyot said.

"She is fine and we are all glad this problem is over," said Jesus Dureza, President Macapagal's special adviser for Mindanao.

"Pursuit operations are ongoing in the area" against Martin's kidnappers, Baluyot added.

These leaves Roman Catholic priest Giuseppe Pierantoni, 44, still in the hands of the Pentagon gang. He was abducted by the gang, made up of former members of the Muslim separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), on Oct. 17.

Military officials say the MILF, which signed a ceasefire with the government earlier this year, is backing the Pentagon group but the rebels deny this.

Another Muslim group, the Abu Sayyaf, is holding an American missionary couple and a Filipino nurse in the southern island of Basilan.

The Abu Sayyaf has links with Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the Sept. 11 terror attacks in the United States.

Muslim armed groups in Mindanao have often resorted to kidnapping foreigners and Christians to raise funds through ransom.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers particularly over the Eastern sections.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 21°
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	HI 23° Lo 13°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 19°
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	HI 34° Lo 21°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 20°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 16°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 21°
Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 24°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 25°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 23°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/12/22/01

ROUNDUP

Death squad on vacation?

DIGOS CITY—Members of the so-called Digos Death Squad, a vigilante group targeting suspected drug pushers here, have suddenly stopped its operations, prompting speculations that they might have taken a "Christmas break." Mayor Arsenio Latasa told a local radio station the group's last victim was a former policeman, who got hooked on drugs. Supt. Guillermo Lara, Davao del Sur police director, however, said that policemen should be on alert and do everything to prevent more killings. Lara also warned police chiefs that they would be relieved if new killings occur in their areas of responsibility. At least 15 suspected pushers have died here since the DDS started its anti-drugs campaign this year.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

4 kidnap members nabbed

COTABATO CITY—Four suspected members of a kidnap-for-ransom gang operating in Metro Manila were arrested by elements of the Presidential Anti-Kidnapping Task Force in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao on Tuesday. Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry said Gerry Romano, Ronil Bergonia, Cesar Bergonia and Rachel Bergonia, who are wanted for bank robbery in Manila, were arrested in a safe house in Barangay Reboken. Another gang member managed to escape.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 cops hurt in duel

COTABATO CITY—Two police officers assigned in Cotabato province were hurt when they decided to resolve their differences through a gun duel. PO3 Ruben Isiderio and PO1 Libertado Dagumanpan, both assigned at the intelligence section of the Cotabato provincial police office, suffered bullet wounds in their necks after shooting each other during a heated argument. Supt. Ruben Abapo, police provincial director said he has ordered an investigation.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

GMA cites Naga

NAGA CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has commended residents of Naga City for making it the premier city in the Bicol region and also for helping develop outlying towns. Ms Arroyo was here as special guest in the observance of the city's 53rd charter anniversary. The President also commended city Mayor Jesse Robredo for his pioneering efforts in the development of the city and its outlying towns. She lamented, however, that Bicol has remained the second most depressed region in the country after the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Masbate firm in hot water

LEGAZPI CITY—The Social Security System has accused a large firm in Masbate City of failure to remit the contributions of its employees to the agency. In a complaint for violation of the Social Security Law, SSS Masbate branch manager Adelina Lique charged that Crown B Agro Development and Management Inc. did not remit its employees' contributions to the SSS amounting to P469,138. Crown B operates a multiple-hectare, multimillion-peso agricultural complex in Aroroy town that produces aquamarine products and hybrid swine and cattle.

Rey Nasol, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Quarrying tagged cause of ruin of Banaue terraces

BAGUIO CITY—A Catholic Church-based corruption watchdog in Ifugao and Mt. Province slammed the destruction of the watershed of the already endangered Banaue rice terraces because of quarrying.

The Social Action and Development Center (SADC) of the Apostolic Vicariate of Bontoc–Lagawe said Mt. Polis in Banaue is in danger of collapsing because of incessant quarrying.

"Quarrying activities in Mt. Polis have been ongoing now for 10 years," a SADC report said.

"Yet the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is aware and has tolerated both small- and large-scale quarrying and clearing of the mossy forest for vegetable gardening."

The DENR has not exercised its authority over this vital watershed, the SADC said.

It also said the people of Banaue were not involved in the management and protection of Mt. Polis.

Although Ifugaos practice an indigenous forest and watershed management called the *pinugo* or the *muyong*, this is usually done in private forests.

Ifugaos are usually ambivalent about planting trees in community forests like those in Mt. Polis because to cut these trees, they would need witnesses to prove that they planted the trees to avoid conflicts.

Planting trees in the *muyong* is less stressful. At present, quarrying and vegetable gardening remain unhampered in Mt. Polis, the SADC said.

The provincial environment and natural resources office (Penro) had informed the SADC last year that it had not issued an environmental compliance certificate to quarries operating along the Bontoc-Banaue road at the foot of Mt. Polis.

The Penro also said small-scale quarrying in the area had been stopped.

But this was disputed by the SADC. "Small and large-scale quarrying continue. Despite the negative effects of quarrying on very narrow mountain roads, the DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways have not placed 'No Quarrying' signs in the area," the group said.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's World Heritage Committee recently put the Ifugao rice terraces in its list of endangered heritage sites.

"In the absence of a systematic monitoring program and comprehensive management plan, it is, at present, impossible to guarantee the preservation and sustainable development of these rice terraces," Unesco said.

Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

HOLIDAY FARE VALHANDUMON

A vendor displays wild ducks being sold along the highway in Sta. Maria, Bulacan. A pedestrian walks past the goods apparently curious but not prepared to buy.

PMAer's case reaches AFP chief

STA. CRUZ, Ilocos Sur—The wheel of justice is finally turning in the mysterious death of Army 2nd Lt. Jessica Chavez after her case was endorsed for assistance to the Armed Forces chief of staff.

The endorsement came after the parents of Chavez wrote President Macapagal-Arroyo to ask for her help in solving the case.

"The case is moving, albeit slowly. I hope those responsible for my daughter's death would be arrested," said Efren Chavez, Chavez's father told the INQUIRER.

Jessica Chavez, 23, a member of Philippine Military Academy Sanghaya Class 2000, was found dead in her barracks at Fort Bonifacio on Feb. 9 this year. She had a bullet wound in her chest.

Retired Maj. Gen. Arturo Carillo, presidential adviser on military affairs, had endorsed Chavez's case to Gen. Diomedio Villanueva "for appropriate action."

"We are writing you, our honorable President, because we are seeking your help to give justice to our daughter's death. We are puzzled on the real reason of her death," the Chavez couple said in their letter written in Filipino. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Bishop accepts priest's offer to go on leave

By Raj Padilla
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The Archdiocese of Jaro has accepted the offer of a beleaguered priest in Tigbauan town to go on indefinite leave of absence in the wake of charges of mismanagement and corruption hurled against him.

In a pastoral letter released yesterday, Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said he and the Archdiocesan Board of Consultors granted Father Eleuterio Carton's request "for the sake of opening doors for uniting the parishioners."

The priest's continued stay, he added, would only fuel the hostility between the pro and the anti Carton groups.

While he stands by his priest, Lagdameo said he is also duty-bound "to stand for the welfare of the whole flock."

The prelate also called on Tigbauan residents to observe "calmness of spirit, a forgiving heart and a prayerful disposition" to solve the problem.

Lagdameo had been criticized by anti-Carton groups for failing to act on their petition demanding the priest's ouster.

But the prelate said he did not want to ventilate in public what he knew and what he was doing. "I want to keep what I know as matters of conscience. Sadly, this has been interpreted as non-involvement in the issue," he said.

At least 60 parishioners of Tigbauan filed a petition on Nov. 17 asking Lagdameo to replace Carton because his continued stay in the town was "an insult to the intelligence and dignity of every right-thinking Tigbaueño."

The petition said that aside from overstaying in the town, Carton failed to account for the big donations that went to the parish of Tigbauan, about 24 kilometers south of here.

The priest allegedly failed to explain where some of the Church's pieces of priceless property went, the petition said.

Shortly after the petition was filed, Carton, 64, requested Lagdameo to allow him to go on indefinite leave for "health reasons."

But parishioners loyal to Carton held a rally last Tuesday to call for his retention. They described the accusation against Carton as baseless and malicious.

"He came to Tigbauan 20 years ago already a rich man. He comes from a rich family," said a female parishioner, who asked not to be named.

She said Carton would have not stayed as parish priest of Tigbauan for 20 years if he were corrupt and abusive.

Lagdameo said the pro-Carton group might be saying the truth but "they should not idolize him as if he has not committed any mistake."

But on the other hand, he said, the allegations against Carton may be true but the anti-Carton faction should not condemn the priest as if he has not done some good things.

Isabela town council rejects tests of genetic corn

DR. Arnold Estrada, Monsanto-Philippines product devleopment manager, shows the Bt-corn plants in Barangay Villaluna, Cauayan City in Isabela. BEN MOSES EBREO

ILAGAN, Isabela—Through a unanimous vote, councilors here closed the door on Wednesday to the *Bacillus thuringiensis*-injected corn (Bt-corn) field trials next year in this capital town.

The decision also upheld the council's Resolution 112 approved on Oct. 22, which imposed a moratorium on Bt-corn field trials here.

The council voted 10-0, on the recommendation of Councilor Perlita Gaoiran, committee on agriculture chair, to junk the pro-Bt corn manifesto.

It also asked the council to support the moratorium unless scientific studies would prove the Bt-corn's toxicity-free features and its food and nutritional values.

The pro-Bt corn manifesto was submitted to the council for consideration and was signed by 1,088 farmers and village leaders in 10 villages here.

Gaoiran said her committee's investigation showed that many farmers were not fully informed about the manifesto while others signed the document thinking it was an "attendance sheet" for the meetings that they had attended.

Two barangay captains informed the council that the manifesto's contents were not read in detail to farmers who attended earlier meetings called by Monsanto-Philippines, the proponent of the Bt-corn tests.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Dr. Victor Alpuerto, project chief, and Dr. Arnold Estrada, product development chief, both of Monsanto-Philippines, for comments. Their mobile phones were out of reach.

On Dec. 13, the farmers who signed the manifesto told a committee hearing that they signed blank papers as "attendance sheets."

Some farmers, however, said they signed the manifesto because they believed it would help them attain better corn production.

Ronnie Cabangbang, Monsanto technology executive, said the firm is planning to file either a motion for reconsideration before the council.

Cabangbang, after the Dec. 13 hearing, told the INQUIRER that he was surprised how some farmers had turned around from their position supporting the Bt-corn tests.

Field tests of the Bt-corn in other areas like Barangay Carulay in Echague and Barangay Villaluna in Cauayan City will push through next year, he said.

"It is only in Ilagan that we met strong opposition against the dry season field trials," Cabangbang said. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

NGO tags city as main source of explosives

By Debra Jane Magallon
PDI Visayas Bureau

AN INDUSTRY under fire. Drums of chemicals used for the manufacture of explosives and firecrackers were found by authorities in Sta. Maria, Bulacan. VAL HANDUMON

CEBU CITY—Talisay City, the newest city in Metro Cebu, was found to be the source of explosives used in illegal fishing activities in Cebu province.

Talisay City, which is also known one of the drug trafficking centers of Cebu, is now considered the seat of explosives production that is used in illegal fishing in the waters of Cebu, according to Cebu City Bantay Dagat Commission project director Elpidio de la Victoria.

De la Victoria said they were able to identify four coastal barangays in the city where families make blasting caps and dynamites for a living. They are the villages of Biasong, San Roque, Cansojong and Tangke.

Talisay, which was declared a city last year to become the fifth under the jurisdiction of Cebu province, is the gateway to southern Cebu and the newest commercial and residential hub in Metro Cebu. It is located some 12 kilometers from Cebu City.

De la Victoria said the production and smuggling of blasting caps and dynamites are now considered a very lucrative business.

Profit

The cost of one sack of 50 kilos of ammonium nitrate, the ingredient used in making dynamites, would range from P1,000 to P1,500.

The blasting caps would sell for P400 per bundle, he said.

De la Victoria also said he believed that unscrupulous businessmen are behind the illicit trade. "They are making millions (of pesos) at the expense of small fishermen," he said.

De la Victoria said he has discussed the problem with Talisay City Mayor Eduardo Gullas who, he said, will be asking the city council to approve the creation of the Talisay Environmental Management Office, which will provide alternative means of livelihood for the families who are into the illegal explosives business.

Senior Insp. Raul Rendon, deputy chief of the Firearms and Explosives Unit of the Cebu Provincial Police Office, admitted that authorities were having difficulty monitoring the production and transport of explosives made in Talisay because they lack manpower.

Talisay City is considered the fishing center of Metro Cebu as most fishing boats unload their daily catch at the coastal village of Tangke before these are distributed to the various markets in Cebu City.

Trawlers

But Talisay is also home to trawlers that go to other coastal municipalities and cities in Cebu and its neighboring islets to fish illegally, according to Bantay Dagat records.

Reports gathered by the PNP Maritime Group also said the fishermen who operate these trawlers are armed.

The unabated illegal fishing activities in the waters of Cebu has already caused wide devastation in the seas of Visayas.

Illegal fishing has led to the destruction of coral reefs, said Elmer Carillo, regional president of the Central Visayas Fishermen's Group.

Carillo said that in Mactan Island alone, 70 percent of coral reefs have already been destroyed due to cyanide fishing.

The explosives industry is also facing rough waters in the pyrotechnics business in Central Luzon.

Recent statements issued by interior department and police officials show a renewed campaign against the manufacturing and sale of firecrackers.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr. recently issued an order banning the entry of firecrackers and pyrotechnics in buildings and banning their sale on the streets.

The move, authorities said, is aimed at keeping the New Year injury-free and reducing the number of casualties during New Year revelries.

New ARMM gov faces raps for assuming post

By Charlie Señase
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Even before he could assume his post, newly elected Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Gov. Parouk Hussin has to face graft charges filed against him.

Lawyer Macapanton Abbas Jr., lead counsel of acting ARMM Gov. Alvarez Isnaji, said his colleague Dalidig Sundad on Thursday filed the case against Hussin before the Office of the Ombudsman in Mindanao.

Abbas said Hussin's attempt to assume office on Dec. 4 was "without legal basis."

Sundad said Hussin, an administration candidate during the Nov. 24 regional elections, cannot assume office until Sept. 30, 2002 even if he had been declared by the Commission on Elections as the duly elected ARMM governor.

Abbas and Sundad agreed that the supposed assumption into office by Hussin had lapsed and so the law on the term of office under RA 9054 (the amended Organic Act of ARMM) has to be followed.

"He (Hussin) assumed without authority and therefore all his previous orders and memorandum in the autonomous government were illegal because (they were) contrary to law," Sundad said.

Abbas explained that they were seeking "the suspension not nullification" of the effects of Hussin's proclamation by the Comelec until such time that the issue on the term of office has been clarified by the court.

Judge Esmael Bagundang of the Regional Trial Court here temporarily restrained Hussin from assuming his post.

Hussin considered these obstacles put up by the Isnaji camp as anti-people as it prevented him from performing his duties as ARMM governor.

Some quarters branded the incumbent regional officials, who were opposed to the taking over of their successors led by Hussin, as power-hungry.

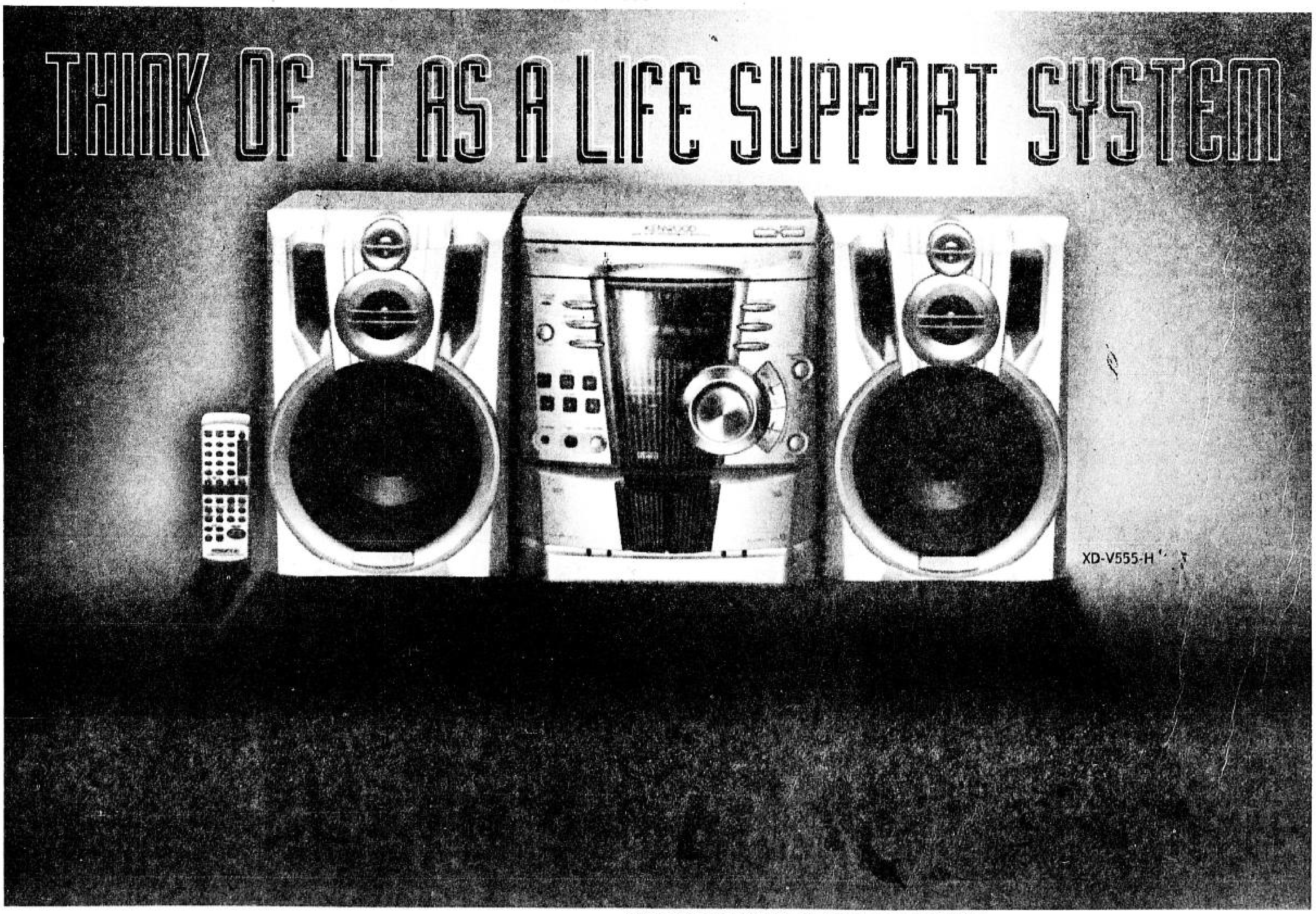
But Sulu Assemblyman Alhabsi Hassan denied such accusation, insisting that they were "sticking to our posts because the law says so."

"If we are still clinging to our positions (in government) it is because the law says our term shall end on Sept. 30 when our successors shall have been elected and qualified. Since their election and qualification happened in November and December, respectively, the Sept. 30 referred to in RA 9054 would now mean 2002," Hassan said.

Another Sulu Assemblyman, Nazir Ynawat, said the flaw in Section 4 of Article 6 on the "term of office" of ARMM-elected officials had been recognized by Congress, prompting Rep. Gerry Salapuddin of Basilan and Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. to file separate bills making the first working day of January next year as the official date for the new elected officials to assume office.

Assemblyman Abdulkarim Langkuno of Maguindanao said as lawmakers, they have to lead by example. "We should uphold the law at all times and we are ready to submit ourselves to the ruling of the court."

While Isnaji and the other incumbent officials are insisting that the law of the land should prevail, defeated gubernatorial candidate Ebrahim "Toto" Paglas III stressed that his electoral case on alleged fraud committed in favor of Hussin should stop his rival from governing while the Comelec holds special elections.



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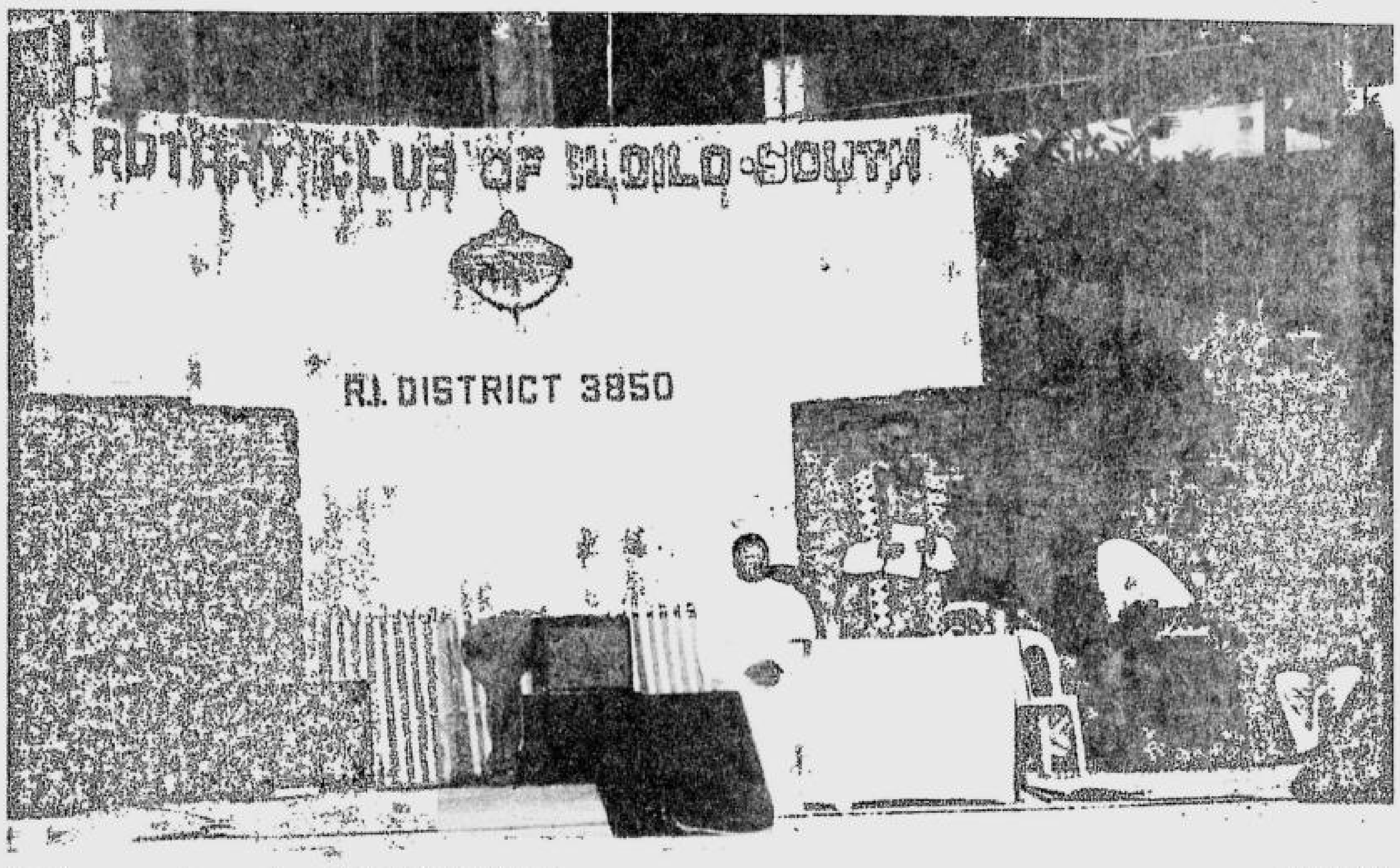
INQUIRER Visayas

JUN BANDAYREL, Editor ◼ EDRALYN L. BENEDICTO, Bureau Chief

Ilonggos find a new place for freedom

BY NESTOR P. BURGOS JR.
Iloilo City



JARO Archbishop Angel Lagdameo celebrates the last Mass at the historic Rotary Amphitheater in Iloilo City.

PHOTOS BY NESTOR P. BURGOS JR.

BEFORE the end of the year, one of Iloilo's historic landmarks will be torn down.

The Rotary Amphitheater, which has been a regular venue of political, religious and cultural events, will be demolished to give way to the construction of a parking space of the new provincial capitol.

A new amphitheater will be built near the old site.

In a simple but sentimental program, political leaders and groups that have used the place since it was constructed in 1974 paid tribute to it on Dec. 18, the 145th birth anniversary of Ilonggo patriot Graciano Lopez Jaena.

Dubbed "Paghanduraw," the tribute included a Mass officiated by Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, followed by performances by different groups.

Silent witness

Lagdameo called the Rotary Amphitheater a "hallowed ground" and a place of "historic gatherings through the many years."

"It has also been the birthplace of sacred celebrations—the Masses that were offered to the Lord that He may hear the people's prayer," said Lagdameo.

He said the amphitheater "has been the silent witness of many events that punctuate the history of Iloilo province."

A project of the Rotary Club of Iloilo-South, the amphitheater sits at the center of a 2,000-square-meter, grass-covered lot, between the Museo Iloilo and the old provincial capitol. It is strategically located at the intersection of three main streets: Bonifacio Drive and Iznart and General Luna Streets.

Antonio Hechanova, 63, the club president in 1973-74, said architect and Rotarian Joemarie Montinola designed the project. The amphitheater was constructed during the administration of then Gov. Conrado Norada.

"The club's 40 members then observed that there was no space where people could assemble and where bands could hold performances for free," said Hechanova.

The club entered into a 24-year lease contract with the provincial government at the cost of one peso per year.

Hechanova said construction cost was P50,000, but the amount was largely offset by contributions like bags of cement and other building materials.

Through the years, the place was gradually developed. A skating rink was put up and later, concrete seats were erected around the stage.

The project has earned citations and won the Project of the Year Award from the Rotary International.

After it was completed in 1974 and throughout most of the martial law period, the venue was mainly used for entertainment.

Protests venue

But the place was swept later by the turbulent political situation, as the Marcos dictatorship became more isolated from the people.

The free concerts gave way to political rallies against the regime and later to the "People Power I" and "People Power II" upheavals.

While the club shouldered the cost of maintaining the area, Hechanova proudly said it has never denied any group or individual the use of the amphitheater.

Siegfred Deduro, vice president for the Visayas of the party-list group Bayan Muna, said the amphitheater was among the sites that represent the Ilonggos' love for freedom.

He said the protests against the Marcos dictatorship were first held at Plaza Libertad and later at the Freedom Grandstand. When the rallies drew tens of thousands of people, the venue shifted to the amphitheater to accommodate the crowd, especially after the assassination of opposition leader Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr.

"It is a symbol of the people's protest against oppression," said Deduro.

Among the memorable protests mounted at the amphitheater were the 10,000-strong rallies against oil price increases in 1994, the uproar against proposed Charter changes during the Ramos administration in 1997 and the anti-Estrada protests last year and early January.

It is also where anti-Estrada groups declared then Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, an Ilonggo herself, *persona non grata* at the height of the impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada late last year.

"This place is historic because this is where we saw the Ilonggo people struggling for one cause," said Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas. It will always be part of the city's history, he said.

Baby Zerrudo, a member of the El Shaddai, said the amphitheater was the regular venue for the Catholic charismatic group's anniversary celebration every second Sunday of May.

Thousands of El Shaddai members attended the prayer rallies that last until midnight. "Many were converted here," Zerrudo said.

She said they preferred the venue because the place was accessible and open to the public.

Beautiful music

"We made beautiful music here countless of times with the Ilonggo people making history," said Jojo Pineda, lead vocalist of the progressive band, the Artista kag Manunulat nga Makibanwahanon (Ambon).

The band first performed in the amphitheater in 1983. It sang anti-Estrada songs in its last performance on stage. Construction workers danced on top of the nearly finished building of the new capitol as the band played the anti-Estrada hit song, "Huling-Huli."

Fred Chua, president of the Rotary Club of Iloilo-South, said the club's 34 members decided to hold the tribute after it was confirmed that the venue will not be spared by the construction of the new capitol.

The old provincial capitol was destroyed by fire in 1998. The new building, costing around P334 million, is set for completion in February next year.

"We were all saddened. This place has meant a lot for us in the past 24 years," said Chua.

Construction of the new amphitheater will begin in January next year. Chua said its size would be the same as that of the original one but would cost P600,000. He said the club would raise the amount through contributions.

Freedom Park

Rotarians are hopeful that the new amphitheater would serve the same purpose of the old venue. Chua, however, gave assurance that the club would retain its policy of free use of the venue.

Gov. Niel Tupas pledged the provincial government's support in the construction of the new amphitheater. "This will become our Freedom Park."

Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said that despite the amphitheater's historical significance, "we are giving space to the greater plan of the province and the city."

Jeffrey Celiz, chair of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Panay, said the amphitheater's significance would last forever. "The Ilonggo's love for freedom and justice will always find a place."

FEDERATION OF ILOILO FARMERS ASSOCIATION
FIFA

MEMBERS of militant groups recall past protest actions held at the amphitheater during the program.

The women's movement and the Anti AWIR bill

LUCID INTERVALS

Rowena V. Guanzon

EMILY was only 16 when she met Rod, an Army man assigned in the Visayas. Having moved from one relative to another as a household helper, she was easily seduced by Rod to live with him without marriage.

When Rod had to return to his province, he told her that he was married, but it was all right with his wife that he and Emily live in the same house. Not having any choice, she went with him. There the abuse started. She was treated as a maid by Rod's wife, and when she complained, he beat her up.

"*Sumbag'maski asa,*" as she told the Women's Crisis Center (WCC).

After she gave birth to her first child, someone helped her go to Manila to find a job. But Rod found her, and whenever he was in Manila, he lived with her and continued to beat her up. She could not move to another place because she was resigned to the fact that Rod would find her wherever she went and she had no money.

One evening, in a fit of jealousy and while drunk, Rod aimed his "*paltik*" (homemade gun) at her vagina and fired several shots, hitting her thigh. It was then that she sought help from the WCC after she learned of its services from community workers.

After recuperating and undergoing counseling, Emily returned to her house, but four years later, Rod came back again. She was powerless against him. The physical, psychological and emotional abuse continued until Rod died.

Emily is just one of thousands of women who suffer abuse in the hands of their partners or spouses but have no recourse under the law and the justice system.

According to the WCC's Feminist Action Research on the "Impact of Violence Against Women on Women's Health" (UNPFA-funded, 1995-1998), six out of 10 are victims of pre-marital rape by their present husbands or live-in partners, 87 percent of mothers of incest victims/survivors were battered wives, and 50 percent of their clients for the past 10 years were battered by their husbands or partners.

There is no specific law that addresses violence against women in intimate relationships, which includes wives and those in live-in relationships.

This is what the Anti Abuse of Women in Intimate Relationships (Anti AWIR) bill, sponsored by Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, and written by the Women's Legal Bureau Inc. for Sibol, a network of nine women's organizations, seeks to address.

Women, because of their powerlessness in relation to men, need special protection from the law. With very few exceptions, men control the finances of the family and have the power and resources in the community.

But in consolidating the Anti AWIR bill with the other bill on domestic violence, the House committees on revision of laws and on women are inclined to include men to be protected by the same bill.

Our representatives from the Visayas, especially my friend Harlin Abayon of Samar, insist that men are also abused and should be included. I do not know if Vicky Locsin of Leyte agrees, but Harlin's sympathy with his fellow men is understandable.

But all government and NGO statistics show that it is women who are abused by men. Men who are victims are usually verbally abused, and they are the rare exception.

The reason our legislators want to include men in the law is political; it is for the benefit of their male voters. But have they wondered why there is no "men's movement"? It is because men do not need special protection of the law.

I agree with the Anti AWIR bill because it is a more progressive measure than the one on domestic violence. It has a better reading and articulation of real problems of abused women, based on reliable data and two national consultations. It gives urgent, practical and appropriate remedies.

An NGO worker involved in domestic violence matters, health care provider or household member may apply for a barangay protection order or permanent protection order against the abuser. Barangay and police officers, with or without a protection order, are required to assist the woman and any family or household member in getting her personal effects and getting medical attention.

Some say the Anti AWIR bill could be challenged as unconstitutional even if it becomes a law because it does not give equal protection to men. That is their opinion. But the legal researchers of our representatives and senators should know that there are thousands of Supreme Court cases which state that a special law giving protection or benefit to a particular group is not class legislation where there is a substantial distinction for classification, and it is germane to the subject matter of the law.

If the Anti AWIR bill is unconstitutional, the same argument should apply against the Women in Nation Building Act, which created the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, and even, as to children, Republic Act No. 7610 or the law preventing child abuse.

Some women's groups, daunted by the obstacles in Congress, are willing to give in and no longer argue against the inclusion of men in the bills on Anti AWIR or the consolidated version of the bill on domestic violence.

But Sibol is not willing to give up the struggle just yet. This is why some people say it is the women's group's fault that the women are quarrelling among themselves and cannot have a law passed. Excuse me, but it is not the women's groups' fault if Congress is not quick enough to realize that women need special protection. It is the representatives' duty to pass a good law, not the women's movement.

It was, in fact, because of the advocacy of the women's movement which led to the sponsorship of the Anti AWIR bill. The women's NGOs were the ones who heard the stories of abused women, did researches, and gave services.

If Sibol, which includes the WLB, WCC and the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines continue to argue for at least the definition of women in intimate relationships to be in the consolidated bill, it is because of their strong and correct belief that a law which aims to protect women in intimate relationships should not also protect men because of their inequality in power relations.

Our honorable congresspersons should learn that it is their job to listen to arguments and not take these personally as an affront to them if the NGOs disagree.

One role of the NGOs is to afflict the State. There is this expected tension between the State and the NGOs, which is necessary in a democratic process. The NGOs are useless if they can be co-opted by the State. The State is useless if it cannot listen and appreciate what the NGOs are saying.

If the women's groups are not uniform in their strategies and level of acceptance of what Congress is willing to pass, it is not because they are quarrelling with each other. It shows the diversity in their thinking, roles and strategies. But certainly they are united in wanting a law passed to protect married women or those in live-in or dating relationships.

But the question is, will any law do?

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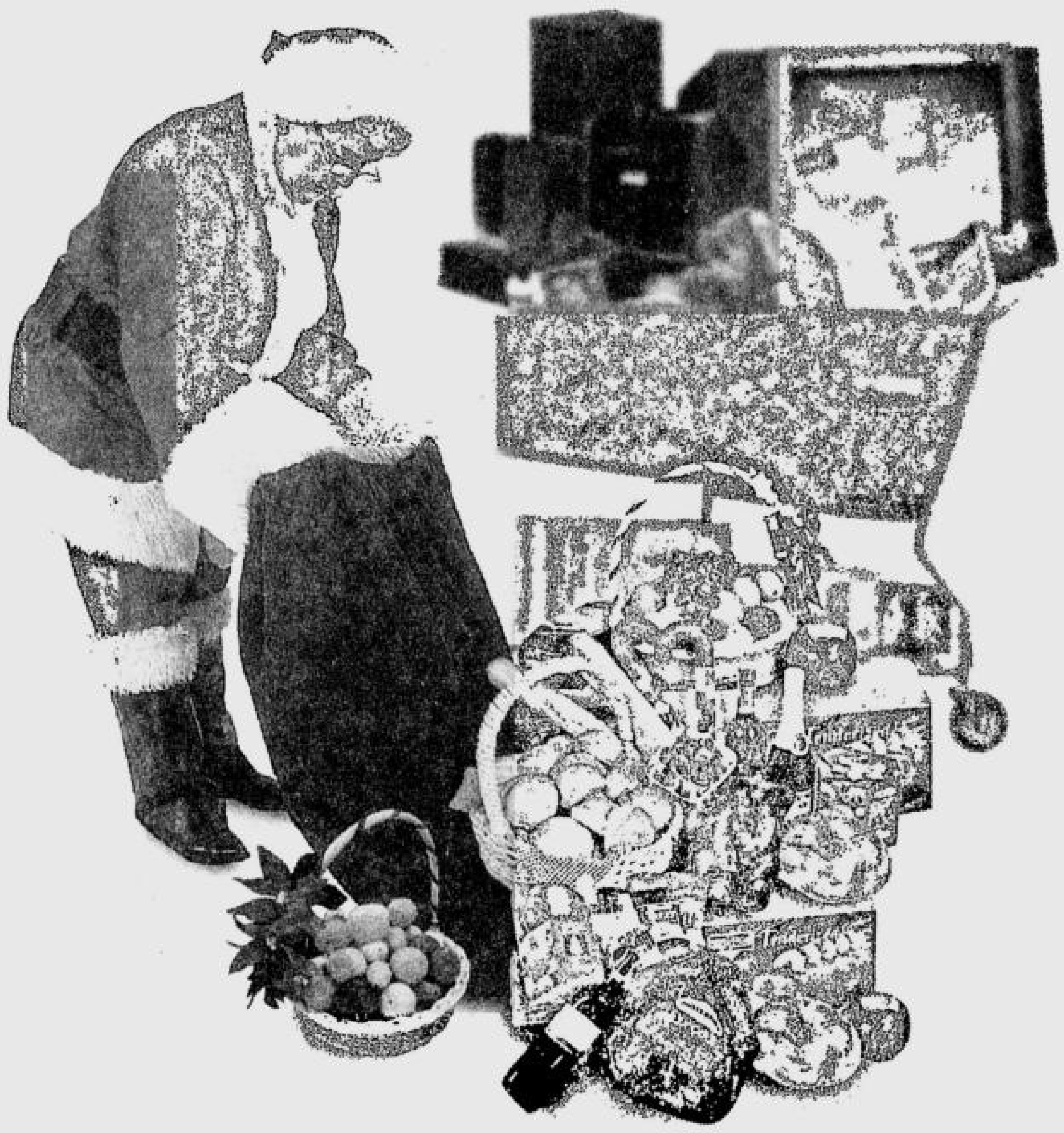

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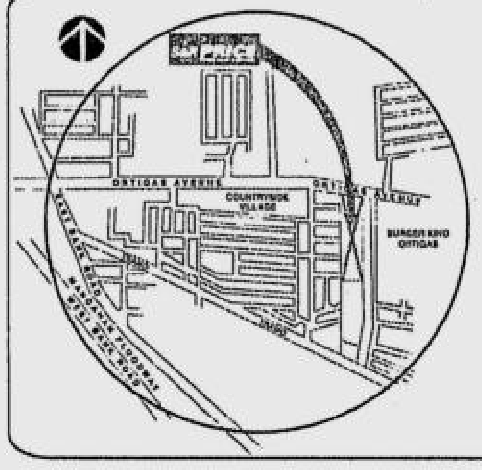

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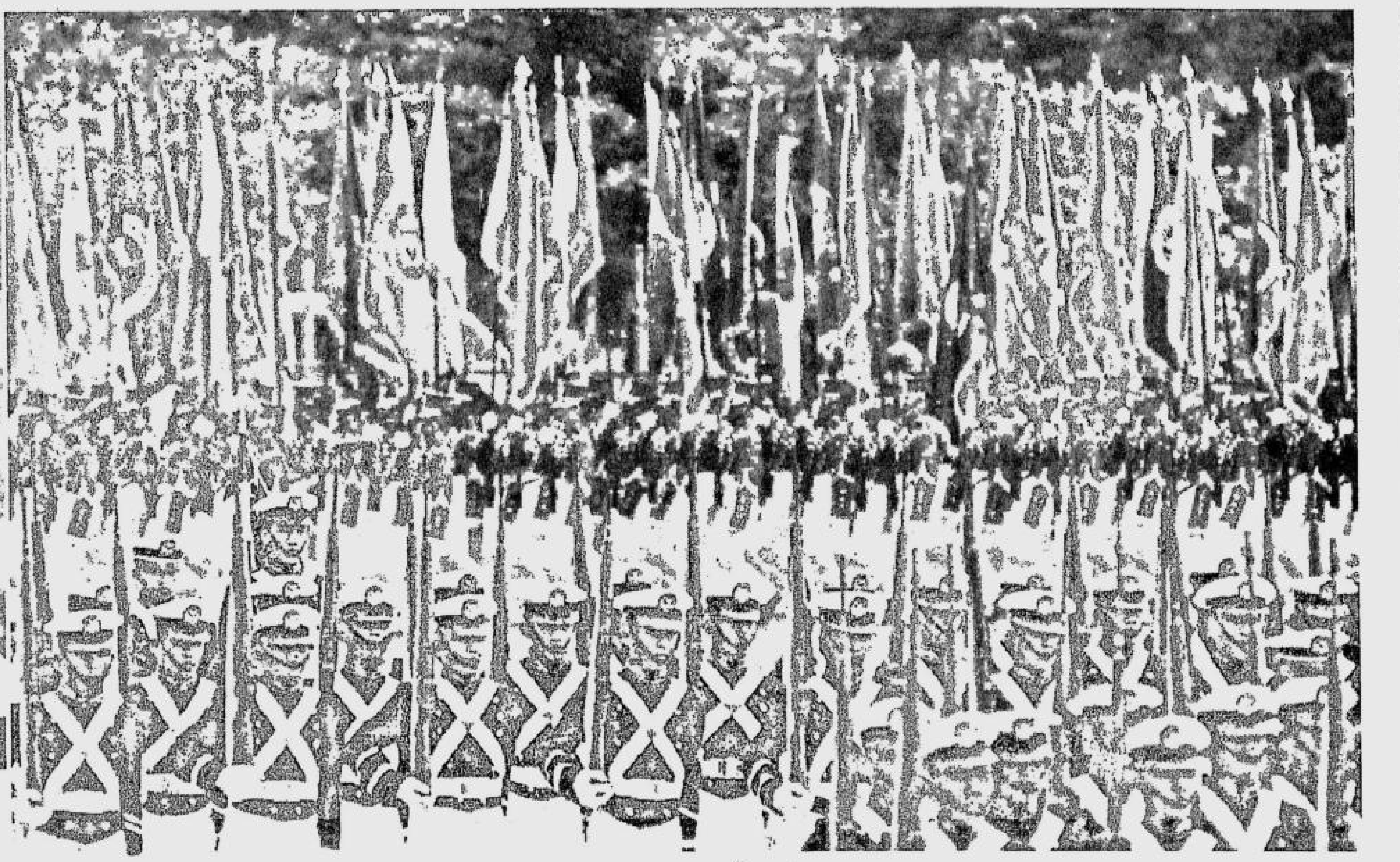

THE COMMANDER in chief gives a morale-boosting speech during the AFP's 66th founding anniversary celebration on Friday at the Camp Aguinaldo parade grounds. EDWIN BACASMAS

Gloria defends her troops

(From page A1)

The military top brass led by AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes were accused of having a hand in the payment of ransom for the release of hostages being held by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan.

Their accuser, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, claimed that P5 million of the P17 million paid for a batch of hostages went to military officers and that the ransom payment had the approval of people working out of Malacañang.

Osmeña's allegation appears to support earlier claims by Fr. Cirilo Nacorda, parish priest of Lamitan, Basilan, that some military officers are in cahoots with the Abu Sayyaf.

Apparently referring to these allegations, Ms Macapagal said she was aware that many in the military have "felt agony because there are those who try to blur or diminish the grandeur of your professionalism."

Political agenda

Ms Macapagal said that these allegations by the military's "detractors" are "no doubt colored by their own political agenda."

To accentuate the AFP's proud legacy, Ms Macapagal decorated posthumously a young lieutenant and his sergeant who died fighting in the infamous battle of Lamitan last June 1.

The late 2nd Lt. Kenneth Bulong, platoon leader of armored vehicles which saw action in Lamitan, was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Star.

Bulong's armored vehicle driver, the late T/Sgt. Mario de la Cruz, was awarded the Gold Cross Medal.

The military was pilloried for the Lamitan incident where the Abu Sayyaf led by its chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani and spokesperson Abu Sabaya managed to slip out of a military cordon together with their hostages.

Nacorda and several Lamitan residents later howled that money changed hands even while the Abu Sayyaf appeared to have been cornered in a hospital in Lamitan.

It was at this time that construction magnate Reghis Romero II, his girlfriend and a 9-year-old hostage supposedly managed to escape, according to the military.

Formulate doctrine

In her speech, Ms Macapagal also directed the AFP top brass to formulate a new military doctrine based on concrete Philippine conditions and experiences.

She gave the military a deadline of six months to come up with a field manual reflecting this doctrine.

Since its inception, the AFP has been molded according to the United States military doctrine.

The President also announced that she is ordering the release of P200 million for the AFP's Retirement Service and Benefit System.

The RSBS is a mutual fund which provides loans and other financial assistance to both active and retired soldiers.

Other awards

The President also conferred other awards:

- Medal of Valor (posthumous). S/Sgt. Herminigildo Yurong of the Marines. For conspicuous courage in action against Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels in Matanog, Maguindanao, on May 29, 2000.
- Distinguished Service Star. Rear Adm. Ruben Domingo for meritorious service as commander of the Naval Education and Training Command.
- Outstanding Achievement Medal, Col. Francisco Bravo, commanding officer of the 51st Engineering Brigade.
- Award of Gawad sa Kaunlaran, Maj. Diosdado Landagan, treasurer of the AFP Provident Trust Fund.
- Award of Gawad sa Kaunlaran, Dr. Lorna Lopez of the Medical Corps.
- Award of Gawad sa Kaunlaran, Rev. Alex Eduave, senior pastor of the Pentecostal church in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental.
- Enlisted Personnel of the Year Badge, T/Sgt. Jose Rodriguez.
- Best Cafgu (Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units) Auxiliary of the Year Badge, Leonardo Orosco.
- Civilian Supervisor of the Year Badge, Dr. Famador Genaldo of the Army.
- Civilian Employee of the Year Award, Rogelio Estingor of the Air Force.
- Male ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) Cadet of the Year Badge, Midshipman 1st Class Rexmond Chua.
- Female ROTC of the Year Award, Cadette Maria Edisa Honor Altarez.
- Plaque of Recognition for Best Cafgu unit, 10th Basilan Civilian Active Auxiliary Company.
- Plaque of Recognition for a Non-Government Organization, Rotary Club of Manila.
- Plaque of Recognition for NGO in Community Development, Metro Pentecostal Church of God Asian Mission Inc.
- Plaque of Recognition for NGO for Peace Effort, Katapatan Scholarship Foundation Inc.

Bomb triggers Makati scare

(From page A1)

detonation."

Tabianan said he found the bomb at around 10 p.m. Thursday night when he was ordered to clear the area of debris and garbage. He then noticed a black garbage bag. When he opened it, he saw a cardboard box labeled "Care Disposable Diapers" tied with nylon cord and packing tape.

"It was rectangular and as large as a can of biscuit and quite heavy. I even carried it without knowing that it was a bomb," Tabianan told the INQUIRER.

Pried open

He then took the package to a well-lighted space to inspect it. Tabianan took an iron saw and used it to peel off one side of the box. He was surprised to find wires inside. He also detected the heavy smell of kerosene. He then became convinced that the package was a bomb.

Tabianan called the attention of one of the guards of the Makati Commercial Estate Association (Macea). The guard merely told him not to touch the box. Tabianan instead returned the box to where he found it.

As his other co-workers arrived at daybreak, Tabianan told them of his find: "It was then we all realized that the bomb could explode any minute," he said.

The matter was quickly reported to the security guards of the Allied Bank Building. In turn, Gregorio Hong, Allied Bank senior vice president, called the police who arrived on the scene at around 6:15 a.m.

A sleepless and visibly shaken Tabianan told police that he did not see anyone, who might have planted the bomb in the vicinity.

Tabianan was hired by the Clarks Concrete Products, which holds office at No. 1717 Ma. Orosa St., Malate, Manila, to renovate the façade of the Allied Bank Building.

No suspects yet

As of press time, police investigators led by SPO4 Norman Reyes were still evaluating the statement of Tabianan.

"There isn't anything much in his (Tabianan) statement so far. He just said he found the bomb and that's it," Reyes said.

The Makati police SWAT-EOD squad was prowling the country's financial district to thwart bombing incidents. SPO4 Benny Rull told the INQUIRER that they received another bomb alert at around 11 a.m. at the Atrium Building on Makati Avenue. It was a false alarm.

Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay said the bomb was part of a plot "to destabilize the Makati business district." Yesterday was the last day of work for office workers in the area.

Superintendent Gutierrez told the INQUIRER that his SWAT-EOD squad had been on full alert since the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

"As long as there are timely reports from the public regarding suspicious packages which may contain bombs, our bomb squad can respond swiftly and we will do our best," Gutierrez said.

A bomb disposal expert, who requested anonymity, told the INQUIRER that the bomb was more likely to have malfunctioned.

"The clocks found in the bomb are set for 10 to 12 hours. But even after that, the bomb didn't explode, which could be a sign that it had already malfunctioned," he said.

He also provided an insight into the layout of the bomb. He said the two clocks were actually "an arming device and a timing device wired together. On its own, ammonium nitrate cannot explode. But if it is dipped or soaked in kerosene, it will cause a big explosion." ***With reports from Norman Bordadora, Dona Pazzibugan and TJ Burgonio***

Abenina forced out of LTO

(From page A1)

lusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa (RAM), had urged the President to relieve Abenina of his post for his involvement in various anomalies in the LTO.

Calajate also accused Abenina, himself a former RAM official and retired general, of being a "benefactor" of Supt. Rafael Cardeño, chair of the Young Officers Union (YOU), who was tagged in October as instigator of a destabilization plot against the Macapagal administration.

Cardeño was relieved as Abenina's special assistant in November and reassigned to the Visayas.

Calajate further claimed that Abenina had "militarized" the LTO by appointing police officers in the agency.

The retired commodore recommended Col. Romeo Lim, former chief of staff of the First Scout Ranger Regiment, to replace Abenina. Calajate did not get his wish because Lastimoso got the top LTO post.

Lastimoso was a prosecution witness last year at the impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada.

The former PNP chief testified that Estrada had asked him to go easy on "*jueteng*," an illegal numbers game.

He corroborated the testimony of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson that Estrada was the country's biggest gambling lord.

Abenina's men and other LTO employees expressed regret over the general's resignation.

"It is very unfortunate that General Abenina's efforts are met with intrigues and baseless criticisms. All he wanted was to rid the LTO of corruption and make it the most trusted government institution," said a teary-eyed Supt. Hermogenes Tosino, Abenina's spokesperson.

Tosino explained that Abenina could no longer take the harassment and pressure from certain sectors.

"All kinds of intrigues have been hurled against him (Abenina) by the people who either want the position for themselves or have been turned down by General Abenina when they asked him for favors," Tosino said.

He said the allegations had affected Abenina's performance.

Tosino admitted that information that Abenina would be relieved had pushed him to tender his resignation. The retired general submitted his resignation to Ms Macapagal on Thursday.

Abenina announced his resignation yesterday at a closed-door meeting with LTO employees. He refused to give any interviews to the media.

Tears

Abenina drove the employees to tears when he read Biblical verses as a way of telling them to move on. "There is time for everything," he said.

Orlando Javier, chief of the LTO Civil Security Unit, said Abenina was the only LTO chief who initiated reforms in the agency.

But he said he would support the next LTO chief "especially if he turns out to be as sincere in promoting good governance as General Abenina."

Ding Cortez, an employee at the intelligence and investigation division for 14 years, considered Abenina's resignation a big loss to the LTO.

"You know what the problem with this country is? Those who get dismissed from government service are those who do their job well," Cortez said.

Tosino cited the computerization of LTO as one of Abenina's accomplishments. He said the use of information technology made "fast, efficient and transparent" the delivery of service in the LTO.

Tosino also noted that there had been a considerable change in the work ethic of LTO workers.

"Most of the LTO employees are more honest and efficient now, because in every conference or in his visits to provincial offices, General Abenina would remind them of his mission, which is to improve the image of the LTO," Tosino said.

My dear Watson, it's world's funniest joke

(From page A1)

The joke goes:

"Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson go camping and pitch their tent under the stars. During the night, Holmes wakes his companion and says: 'Watson, look up at the stars, and tell me what you deduce.'

Watson says: 'I see millions of stars, and even if a few of those have planets, it's quite likely there are some planets like Earth, and if there are a few planets like Earth out there, there might also be life.'

Holmes replies: 'Watson, you idiot. Somebody stole our tent!'"

The funniest joke was submitted by Geoff Anandappa from Blackpool and 47 percent of the respondents to the study gave it the highest rating.

The study was devised by Dr. Richard Wiseman of the University of Hertfordshire who stressed that the results were preliminary.

"While we already have some interesting findings, the data collection period will continue till March 2002 when we move to the second phase of the experiment. In the meantime we challenge people to submit a funnier joke than the top-rated one so far," Wiseman said.

The experiment also identified the worst jokes, and discovered what men, women, and people of different nationalities find funny.

"This is an intriguing finding, and we will be carrying out more research to discover exactly what is going on here," said Wiseman.

'Smileometer' scale

Laughlab, organized in conjunction with the British Association for the Advancement of Science, claimed it was the largest experiment of its kind ever conducted. More than 10,000 jokes were submitted to the website (www.laughlab.co.uk) and over 100,000 people from 70 countries rated them based on a five-point "smileometer" scale.

The study found that men and women favored different types of jokes. Top jokes for males involve aggression, putting women down and sexual innuendo. In contrast, females prefer jokes involving word play.

The runner-up for the funniest joke:

"A couple of hunters are out in the woods when one of them falls to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing, his eyes are rolled back in his head. The other guy whips out his mobile phone and calls the emergency services. He gasps to the operator, 'My friend is dead! What can I do?' The operator, in a calm soothing voice says, 'Just take it easy. First, let's make sure he's dead.' There's silence, then a shot is heard. The guy's voice comes back on the line. He says, 'OK, now what?'"

The worst jokes, with 74 percent of the respondents giving them the lowest rating, were:

o Why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the other side.

o Why are chickens considered good employees? Because they work around the cluck.

The Telegraph of London reported the other leading jokes around the world:

Australia: A man left for a holiday to Jamaica. His wife was on a business trip and was planning to meet him there the next day. When he reached his hotel, he decided to send her an e-mail. Unable to find the scrap of paper on which he had written her Web address, he did his best to type it from memory. Unfortunately, his note went to an elderly preacher's wife whose husband had passed away only the day before. When the grieving widow checked her e-mail, she let out a piercing scream, and fell to the floor dead. Her family rushed into the room and saw this note on the screen: "Dearest wife, Just got checked in. Everything prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Your Loving Husband. P.S. Sure is hot down here."

France: "You're a high-priced lawyer! If I give you $500, will you answer two questions for me?"

"Absolutely! What's the second question?"

Finland: A new teacher was trying to make use of her psychology courses. She started her class by saying: "Everyone who thinks they're stupid, stand up!" After a few seconds, Little Johnny stood up. The teacher said: "Do you think you're stupid, Little Johnny? Little Johnny replied: "No, ma'am, but I hate to see you standing there all by yourself."

Belgium: "Well, you see, there are basically three kinds of people in the world. Those who can count and those who can't."

Norway: As a funeral train passes by a golf course, a golfer on one of the greens stops, stands to attention with hat held over his heart as the hearse goes by. Then he goes back to lining up his putt. His playing partner remarks how that was the nicest gesture he'd ever seen, to show such respect for the dead. The first golfer sinks his putt and says: "Well, she was a good wife for 16 years."

Germany: Why is television called a medium? It is neither rare nor well done.

Sweden: A guy phones the local hospital and yells: "You've gotta send help! My wife's in labor!" The nurse says: "Calm down. Is this her first child?" He replies: "No! This is her husband!"

New Zealand: A priest conducts a service in church. "The person who puts the most in the church collection box can choose three hymns," he says. The collection box comes back after being filled up and he finds that someone has donated $1,000. "Who has donated a thousand dollars?" he asks. A woman raises her hand. The priest invites her to the front and tells her to choose three hymns. Pointing at the three most handsome men in the church she says: "I'll have him, him and him."

Jokes by sexes

These jokes were all loved by men but disliked by women.

"While robbing a home, a burglar hears someone say, 'Jesus is watching you.' To his relief, he realizes that it is only a parrot mimicking something it had heard. The burglar asks the parrot, 'What's your name?' The parrot says, 'Moses.' The burglar goes on to ask: 'What kind of person names their parrot Moses?' The parrot replies: 'The same kind of person that names his Rottweiler Jesus.'"

"A man runs home and bursts in yelling: 'Pack your bags sweetheart, I've just won the lottery, all six numbers!' She says: 'Oh wonderful! Should I pack for the beach or the mountains?' He replies: 'I don't care ... just pack and shove off!'"

Women preferred jokes involving word plays like this one: "A man had a dog called Minton. One day it ate two shuttlecocks. When the owner found out, he said bad Minton!" ***With a report from AP***

Ombudsman drops plunder raps vs Erap, Brother Mike

(From page A1)

The resolution was written by Graft Investigation Officers Medwin Dizon, Emmanuel Laurezo and Sherwin Casurao on Nov. 16. It was subsequently approved by Chief Legal Officers Andrew Ammuyutan and Pelagio Apostol.

Gervacio reviewed and signed the resolution as early as Dec. 13. He said the case was resolved "with finality."

In a document dated Dec. 11, Desierto said he had decided to inhibit himself from the proceedings.

He maintained this position even after the House committee on justice voted down the impeachment complaint for "insufficiency in substance."

Among the others cleared were former Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora; former Public Works Secretary and TRB chair Gregorio Vigilar; Cesar Virata, board chair of Coastal Road Corp. (CRC); Luis Virata and Manuel Zamora Jr., executives of Exchange Capitol Corp.; TRB Executive Director Mariano Benedicto; and former PEA chair Frisco San Juan.

Thankful

Commenting on the dismissal of the complaint, Velarde said "the rule of law has prevailed."

"We give thanks for the return of our reputation through the dismissal of the plunder complaint and the affirmation of our good intentions in selling the property to help the government alleviate the traffic problem," Estrada's former spiritual adviser said in a statement.

He said he would reciprocate "this Christmas blessing" by dispensing with any punitive legal action against Francisco.

Francisco had alleged that on March 30, 1999, Estrada "directly and personally" intervened in the land purchase and ordered the TRB and PEA to proceed with the acquisition.

On the same day, Amvel entered into four deeds of sale with the government for the land situated in Barangays Palasan and Calang-Calangan in San Dionisio, Parañaque City.

The land, which has a total area of 79,638 square meters, was sold at P15,355 per square meter.

On the same day, Estrada allegedly issued another directive to the TRB approving the deeds of sale.

On April 5, 1999, Benedicto, representing the TRB, issued a document certifying that the deeds of sale between Amvel and the government were aboveboard.

On April 29, 1999, the PEA paid the 50-percent balance of the purchase price.

'Outrageously overpriced'

Francisco claimed that Velarde acquired the land so he could sell it at an "outrageously overpriced" rate to the government to provide the right of way for the MCTE project.

He said the sale was suspicious because it took place two-and-a-half working days during the Holy Week in March 1999, allegedly on Estrada's behest.

Francisco said that based on the zonal value of residential land in San Dionisio, the total amount of the purchase should have been P394.2 million.

He said the finance department fixed the zonal value of a square meter of land in the concerned barangays at P4,500 plus 10 percent, or P4,950.

"By not following the guidelines set by Administrative Order No. 50, the government was defrauded of the staggering amount of P828,633,390," he said.

Francisco claimed that Cesar Virata and Zamora Jr. pushed for the purchase of the land to expedite the construction of the C-5 Link Expressway.

He said the C-5 Link Expressway and another project, the R-1 Expressway Extension, would benefit the CRC because it would expedite the development of the CRC-owned Caylabne Bay Resort.

Negotiations

In their counter-affidavits, the respondents said the assailed transaction was a product of a series of negotiations between the TRB and Amvel that started as early as the last quarter of 1997.

They said the negotiations were consummated even during the term of President Fidel Ramos because the TRB directed the payment for the property in question as early as May 8, 1998.

They also said the amount of P15,355 per square meter was "very much" lower than the appraisal of the Parañaque City Appraisal Committee during the Ramos administration.

"Amvel reluctantly agreed to the offer notwithstanding its being disadvantageous to the corporation," they said.

Velarde denied that the transaction was completed in just 2-1/2 working days. He said the conceptualization, negotiations and purchase of the land were made during Ramos' term.

In its resolution, the Gervacio panel found that the respondents complied with the prescribed procedure in determining a fair and reasonable valuation of the property in question.

It said the transaction indeed occurred during Ramos' time but that the payment was delayed as the TRB conducted a reappraisal of the property, which led to a further reduction of the actual purchase price.

The panel said the insinuation that Estrada favored Amvel in approving the purchase had no basis.

"If indeed Amvel persuaded respondent Estrada to act on its favor, Amvel could have pushed for the acquisition of the property not at P15,355 but at P20,000 per square meter (the ceiling allowed by the Ramos administration)," the panel said.

Thus, it said, the government saved P369.9 million.

The panel also said Amvel was "able to consolidate the total area measuring 232,078 square meters, contrary to Francisco's claim that the nine lots were acquired specifically for resale to the government C-5 Link project."

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE from powerhomes unlimited corp.

The Board of Directors and all the staff members of POWERHOMES UNLIMITED CORP wish to greet the thousands of Business Center Owners (BCOs) all over the Philippines and in various countries (Hongkong, Dubai, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Singapore and Guam) and the entire Filipino nation a ***JOYOUS SEASON and a POWER NEW YEAR!*** We at PowerHomes are happy to share the blessings that the Lord has so generously bestowed on us during the year 2001.

To celebrate the season, we thank all those who kept faith in us, those who supported us all the way and those who stood by us when the going was definitely the toughest. At the same time, we would like to thank our detractors because we feel that through them, we were able to build on our strength through teamwork, cooperation and a determination to bring out the truth about us. We would like to also thank the media for without their assistance, the truth could have been buried under a thick rug through the machinations of those who wished to destroy our credibility. Most of all, we strongly believe that without the Lord's guidance, we could not have survived the trials of our first year.

To our BCOs, we have grown not only in numbers but more importantly we have learned the significance of consensus building and a unified direction to realize our dreams. We were able to prove that by our sheer strength and your resolve to accomplish what we have set out to achieve in our lives – we weathered the storm and we salute you for this! For us, everyday is Christmastime and a day to be joyous and happy!

To all our other friends and those who continue to doubt us, we share our goal of providing an innovative and unique system for more people to own decent homes; of improving the socio-economic conditions in our country so that our children will have better opportunities and of creating a nation where wealth is enjoyed by the greater majority of Filipinos.

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Espinosa MBA Finals MVP

ESPINOSA

WHEN asked who should be named Most Valuable Player of the just concluded 2001 MBA National Finals series, MBA 2001 National Champion LBC Batangas Blades coach Nash Racela said, "Tonyboy Espinosa."

The former De La Salle guard last played for the Mobiline Phone Pals in the PBA.

The 5-foot-7, Iloilo-born Espinosa scored 21 points in Game 4—17 in the first half.

"*Di ba dapat si* Alex? *Kasi* twice *din siyang naging* best player, *nung* Game 2 *nga*, solo *pa niya e. At saka* zero *ako nung* Game 3," said Espinosa.

But just like Racela, members of the MBA Press Corps unanimously voted for the 27-year-old Espinosa the 2001 MBA National Finals MVP.

"*Dun nga nakita kung gaano kaimportante yung mga* contribution niya (Tonyboy) sa team," said Racela. "He was scoreless in Game 3, *tapos* nung Game 4, he made 21 points."

Espinosa also led the Blades in taking a 1-0 advantage in Game 1 as he scored 19 points, grabbed 2 rebounds and issued 2 assists in their 87-84 victory.

He made 10 points, 8 assists and 2 steals in their 85-74 win in Game 2.

Last year, Espinosa had an on-and-off stint with the Blades due to his recurring knee injury. But because of hard work and patience, he fulfilled his dream of bringing back his old form.

"*Gusto ko lang magpasalamant sa* management, *sa* coaching staff *ng* Batangas *at sa lahat ng aking mga* teammates *kasi binigyan nila ako ng* chance *na magpakita ulit na maaari pa akong maglaro. Kasi* when I was still with Mobiline, *parang iniisip ko na hindi ko na kaya kasi nga pabalik-balik yung* injury *ko sa tuhod*," said Espinosa. "*Pero dito sa* Batangas, *lahat sila naging* very supportive *sa akin kaya hindi ako nahirapan na maibalik ang dati kong laro pati kumpiyansa ko sa aking sarili.*"

Espinosa bested his teammates Eddie Laure, the leading candidate for the season's MVP, Compton and Slasher Reynel Hugnatan for the honors.

Capriati's career is reborn; Hewitt completes ascent

NEW YORK—As Jennifer Capriati smacked the ball over the net to warm up for a US Open match, a video screen overhead showed clips of her playing a decade earlier. The stinging strokes were similar. So much else was different. Tumultuous teens and early 20s behind her, Capriati finally emerged in '01 as the complete player she looked like she could be in '91.

Her success—Australian and French Open championships, a stint at No. 1—was one of several stunning developments in 2001, including an all-sister US Open final, Lleyton Hewitt's rapid rise, and the birth of a boy with championship genes.

"I am proud to be able to come back from everything that's happened in my life," Capriati said in October, when she became the ninth woman to top the WTA rankings. "I think it shows everybody that it's never too late to realize your talent, or your dream."

It took her some time.

At 14 in 1990, Capriati accumulated a string of accolades as the youngest ever to: reach a Grand Slam semifinal, win a Wimbledon match, move into the Top 10.

But then it all unraveled with well-chronicled drug and other problems, and she dropped off the tour in 1993.

Capriati returned to the game in April 1996 ranked No. 267. A breakthrough seemed unlikely.

CAPRIATI

When she won in Australia in January, she returned to the Top 10 for the first time in seven years. Then came her epic French Open final victory (12-10 in the final set) over Kim Clijsters.

And just to show she wasn't a two-tournament fluke, Capriati made it to the semis at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

Venus Williams stopped Capriati's bid for a Grand Slam by winning those two events for the second straight year.

At the U.S. Open, Williams didn't do her customary twirl to celebrate a title. Instead, she hugged her opponent, younger sister Serena, and said, "I love you." *AP*

Nash

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

NASH Racela, he with the mane longer than Sta. Lucia Realty's patience, has finally come of age. By coaching the Batangas Blades to victory past the Negros Slashers in the MBA Finals on Wednesday, Nash has unhinged himself from the shadows of Olsen, the San Miguel Beer spitfire. Olsen is Nash's brother.

Is being a star player more prestigious than a coach?

Not really.

Olsen has been hogging the spotlight for years now. Before Wednesday, Nash was simply that: Nash. Obscure coach. Merely the "other Racela of Philippine basketball."

One achieving success becomes an instant celebrity. With his victory, Nash Racela will no doubt become hot property from coaches' row. Nash can now stand heads-and-shoulders with his eminent brother.

The road to success wasn't roses-laden for Nash. He toiled every step of the way. Surely, he has his own tales of woe before he reached the pinnacle of success.

For one, Nash had to contend with an array of stars as a result of the Batangas-Manila merger; Compton and Adducul were practically what the Manila Metrostars were before the squad shacked up with the Batangas Blades. For another, Nash was up against a hostile crowd in Bacolod when his Blades flew there for the title showdown against the Slashers.

But he conquered them all. In flying colors yet.

Here's to Nash, whose enduring style should inspire siblings aiming for the moon.

De Castro brods advance

DE CASTRO siblings Jandrick and Ivy marched into the championship round of their respective divisions yesterday in the fourth Armando Manzano Age Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Jandrick, the boys' 16-under No. 2, stamped his class over No. 8 Ed Angelo Diez, 6-3, 6-2, to advance against No. 6 Michael Basco, a 6-4, 6-1 winner over No. 7 Boris John Chaves.

Ivy, the girls' 16-under second seed, outplayed third pick Katrina Pamintuan, 6-2, 6-1, to forge a titular duel with No. 1 Berry Sepulveda, a 6-3, 6-0 winner over fourth seed Catherine Flores.

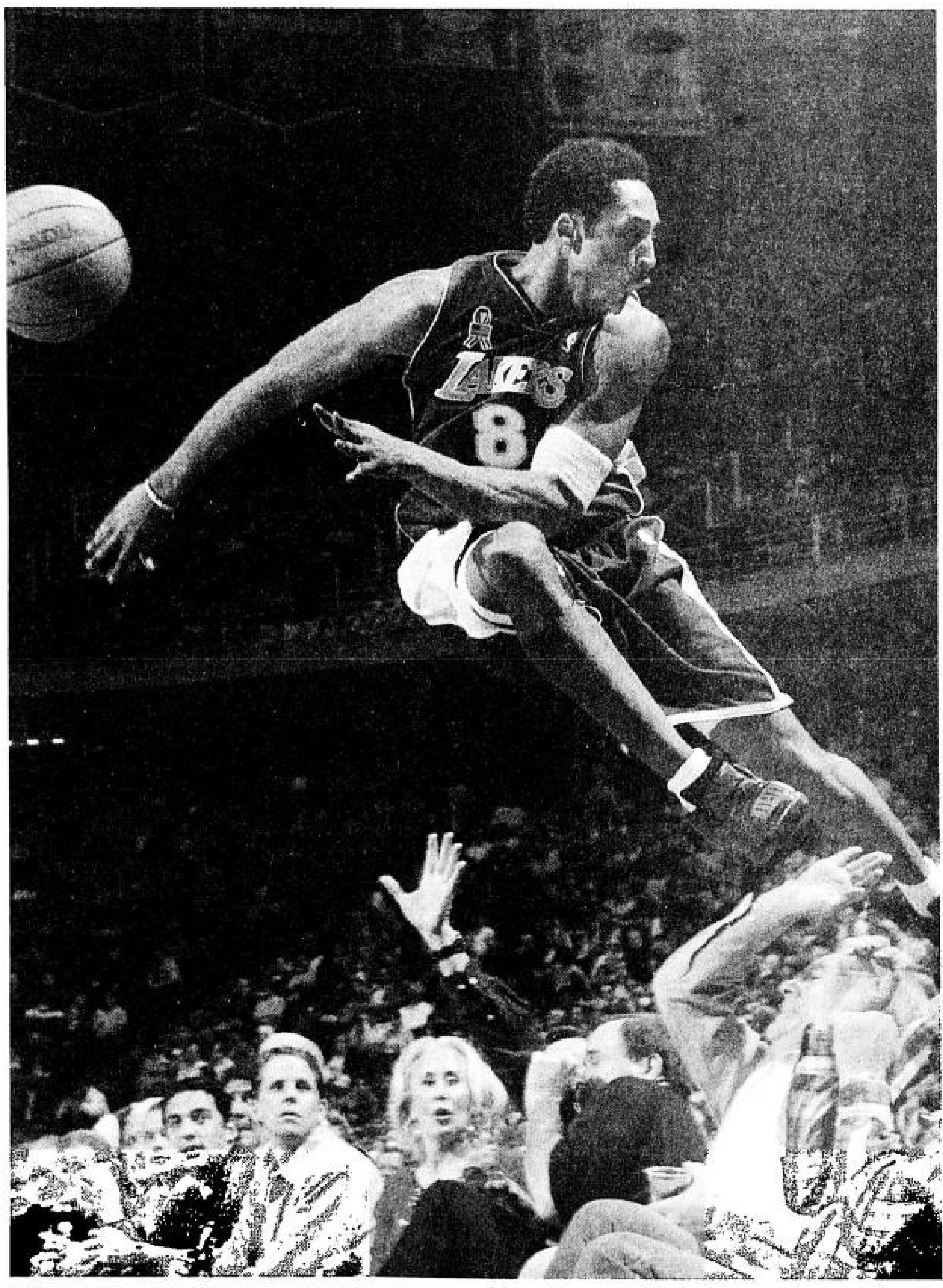
Julie Em Botor, a fifth-grader at the Morning Jew School in Cainta, Rizal reached the girls' 14-under and 12-under finals in this tournament PSC, Viva Mineral Water and official ball Dunlop.

Botor, the 14-under third seed; scored a 6-1, 6-2 upset victory over No. 2 Denise Culaba to advance against top seed Melissa Orteza, a 6-1, 6-1 winner over fourth seed Michelle Bumgarner.

Botor, No. 2 in the 12-under, breezed past fourth seed Sarah Jane Lim, 6-0, 6-1, to reach the final where she will face No. 1 Jessica Agra, who posted a 6-2, 6-2 win over the third-seeded Bumgarner.

Meanwhile, players may now register for the Philta-Head Penn Age Group Championships slated Dec. 29-31.

Deadline of entry is on Dec. 27 at 12 noon. Events on tap are boys' and girls' 18-under, 16-under, 14-under, 12-under and unisex 10-under divisions.



LOS Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant jumps over a row of fans after saving the ball from going out of bounds in the second half of the Lakers' 107-101 win over the Houston Rockets yesterday in Houston. AP

RECORD DEAL

Boston Red Sox sold for $660M

BOSTON—In a $660 million deal that would double the record price for a baseball team, the limited partners of the Boston Red Sox voted unanimously to sell the franchise to a group led by Florida Marlins owner John Henry and former San Diego Padres owner Tom Werner.

While the Red Sox did not announce the price, it was disclosed Thursday to The Associated Press by Thomas Dibenedetto, a current minority shareholder. The current record is the $323 million that Larry Dolan paid for the Cleveland Indians last year.

The record for a sports franchise is the $800 million Daniel Snyder paid in 1999 for the Washington Redskins and the team's stadium in Landover, Maryland.

Thursday's deal for the Red Sox includes Fenway Park and 80 percent of the New England Sports Network.

The agreement must be approved by 75 percent of the 30 major league owners, who usually take about six months to consider sales.

Henry is negotiating to sell the Marlins to Jeffrey Loria, the owner of the Montreal Expos, a team baseball commissioner Bud Selig wants to eliminate.

Red Sox chief executive officer John Harrington is confident Werner and Henry, both close to Selig, have the cash to close the deal, saying they were committed to the team and fans. They are "deeply involved and passionate about the game of baseball," Harrington said.

Larry Lucchino, the former president of the Baltimore Orioles and Padres, is likely to become Red Sox team president if the sale is approved.

Harrington said the Werner-Henry group offered the highest qualified bid for the team. Harrington has repeatedly said the trust would accept the "highest qualified bid" not necessarily the top price offered.

Harrington announced on Oct. 6, 2000, that the Jean R. Yawkey Trust, which has controlled the Red Sox since 1994, would sell its 53 percent stake.

Four groups remained in contention when the limited partners met Thursday. A bid by Werner and Henry to join with local developers Joseph O'Donnell and Steve Karp failed. In a joint statement Thursday, Henry and Werner said the groups couldn't solve the issue of control of the alliance.

Henry and Werner said they submitted their own bid.

Others bidders included Cablevision Systems Corp. chairman Charles Dolan - Larry's brother - and a group that includes New York lawyer Miles Prentice and the private equity firm, the Quadrangle Group. *AP*

Ohno remains perfect at trials

KEARNS, Utah—Apolo Anton Ohno can relax now.

The 19-year-old star of American short-track speedskating remained perfect in the Olympic trials, winning two more races Thursday and ensuring he will compete in all events at the Salt Lake Games.

Ohno won the four-lap time trial in 37.568 seconds. That locked up a spot in the 500 meters, the only race still in question going into the day.

A couple of hours later, Ohno returned to the ice to claim another victory in the 1,500, the same race in which he set a world record last weekend on the Olympic Oval.

Ohno is 6-for-6 in the trials, giving him a staggering 5,921 points with two days left. The Seattle native has an insurmountable lead over his closest competitor, Rusty Smith, who is 2,728 points behind.

"Now I can play it safe," Ohno said. "I've still got to get out there and race, but I can play it a little more safe for sure." *AP*

Southmall ice skating champ

THE SOUTHMALL ice skating team has finally shed its bridesmaid image as it wrested the overall title from the powerhouse Megamall squad at the end of the SM-ISI Asia Skate Philippines 2001 competitions Thursday at SM Megamall.

Led by veteran Ronan Capili, the Southmall skaters took the overall team championship for the very first time in six years as it amassed 701 points to beat Megamall, which settled for second place with 446 points.

"It feels good for us Southmall skaters to win for the first time. I hope we could retain the title next year as we try to work hard," said Capili, a veteran of ISI World Team Championships and Skate Asia competitions.

Indonesia, represented by Sky Rink, placed third with 224.98 points while the Mines Ice Rink of Malaysia ended up with 88 points for fourth place.

Grizzlies nip Knicks as NY misses 5 shots in last 6 sec

NEW YORK—Shane Battier scored 21 points, including a tiebreaking jumper with 9.8 seconds left, and the Memphis Grizzlies defeated New York, 90-88, as the Knicks missed five shots in the final 6 seconds.

It was the first victory ever in New York for the Grizzlies, who lost their previous five games at Madison Square Garden. Memphis won for just the second time this season on the road and dealt the Knicks their fifth loss in six games.

The Knicks had plenty of chances to tie in the final seconds Thursday, but Marcus Camby missed a floater and a tip-in, Kurt Thomas missed a tip-in, Mark Jackson missed a 5-footer and Camby missed another tip.

The loss spoiled a big fourth quarter for Latrell Sprewell, who scored New York's first 14 points of the period, including a personal 9-0 run that tied the game after the Knicks trailed by 13 late in the third.

Sprewell finished with 27 points, Allan Houston had 25, and Jackson added 14 points, eight assists and seven rebounds. Camby was 0-for-6 from the field and 2-for-5 from the foul line.

Stromile Swift scored 15, Pau Gasol had 14, and Jason Williams added 11 points, nine assists and seven rebounds.

Raptors 96, Bulls 91

In Toronto, Vince Carter scored 29 of his 33 points in the second half and led Toronto on a 16-5 run after Charles Oakley floored him with a forearm below the chin in the fourth quarter.

Brad Miller had 24 points, and Marcus Fizer had 19 for the Bulls, who have lost 14 straight road games and five games in a row overall.

Antonio Davis had 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Raptors, who won back-to-back games for the first time since winning three straight from Nov. 23-29.

Carter had 14 points in the third quarter and 15 in the fourth.

Mavericks 113, Bucks 101

In Dallas, Michael Finley and Steve Nash each scored 33 points in the Mavericks' season-high fifth straight victory.

Tim Hardaway added 15 points, and Juwan Howard 13 for the Mavericks, who won despite only eight points and 3-for-14 field goal shooting from their top scorer, Dirk Nowitzki.

Ray Allen and Glenn Robinson both scored 21 points for the Bucks, and Michael Redd added 16. Milwaukee's three-game winning streak ended.

Lakers 107, Rockets 101

In Houston, Kobe Bryant scored 27 points, and Derek Fisher added 23 by making seven of nine 3-pointers as Los Angeles dealt Houston its 15th straight loss.

The Lakers, 25th in the NBA in 3-point shooting, were 12-for-20 (60 percent) from long range.

The Rockets' 15-game losing streak is two short of the franchise record set in the 1967-68 season. They had a separate slide of 15 in a row that same season en route to a 15-67 record. *AP*

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS

Toronto 96, Chicago 91; Memphis 90, New York 88; Dallas 113, Milwaukee 101; L.A. Lakers 107, Houston 101.

Biggest surprises

NBA NOTES

Henry Liao

AT THE quarter-point mark, three NBA teams that reside in the wide-open Eastern Conference have been the league's biggest surprises.

They are the Detroit Pistons (14-9), New Jersey Nets (16-7) and Boston Celtics (15-8).

With a pass-first, shoot-second playmaker in Jason Kidd (14.4 ppg, 10.1 apg, 7.1 rpg), healthy regulars in Kenyon Martin (a team-best 16.7 ppg), Keith Van Horn (16.4 ppg, 7.5 rpg) and Kerry Kittles (12.4 ppg), an adequate middleman in erstwhile third-string center Todd MacCulloch (10.8 ppg, a club-high 7.7 rpg) and a balanced offense that has produced five twin-digit scoring starters, the Nets have sole possession of first place in the Atlantic Division at the latest date in franchise history and enters today's road encounter with Indiana owning the best record in the entire East.

Despite having dropped the first three (vs. LA Clippers, Sacramento and Golden State) of an extended five-game West Coast road trip that take them to Portland today (Manila time) and Seattle tomorrow, the Pistons still occupy the fourth overall spot in the conference, trailing only New Jersey, Central Division frontrunner Milwaukee (15-7) and Boston.

A year ago, Detroit did not capture its 14th victory until Game No. 32 (14-18) and only got its next win seven games later.

Credit the Pistons' turnaround to All-Star guard Jerry Stackhouse's increasing trust in his teammates that resulted in a dependable secondary go-to scorer with excellent three-point skills (a valuable weapon against the zone) in ex-Phoenix Suns forward Clifford Robinson (16.4 ppg, team-leading 41 three-pointers). Stackhouse's now taking only 18.6 field attempts and norming 22.8 points per game, way below his 2000-01 figures of 24.1 fgapg and 29.8 ppg (second in the NBA behind Philadelphia's Allen Iverson). The 6-6 swingman also owns a slightly higher field-goal accuracy from last campaign, .412 to .402.

Another significant factor is the performance of the Pistons' hardworking 6-9 starting center Ben Walace, who leads the NBA in blocked shots at 3.26 bpg and ranks seventh in rebounding with 11.1 rpg.

The Celtics have won 10 of their 12 appearances, including a six-game winning streak from Nov. 27-Dec. 7 that included consecutive victories at Miami, Orlando, New Jersey and Toronto. It was the first four-game road winning skein by Boston since March 1993.

A barometer of a team's playoff worthiness is its performance away from home and Boston has fared well in that department so far. Currently, the Beantown unit owns a 7-5 mark on the road. An acid test for the young Celts comes in a four-game, five-day swing to the Midwest and West from Dec. 26-30 to face Utah, Phoenix, LA Clippers and Sacramento.

Much of the club's early success can be attributed to the offensive prowess of bookend forwards Paul Pierce and Antoine Walker and the confidence of the two now have in their teammates.

Whereas before the duo showed individualistic tendencies, they now have learned to spread the offensive wealth.

The NBA's second highest-scoring pair (51.3 ppg) behind the LA Lakers' duo of Shaquille O'Neal (a league third best 26.5 ppg) and Kobe Bryant (a sixth best 25.9 ppg), the 6-6 Pierce (who visited Manila in September last year) ranks second in the majors with his 26.7-point clip while the 6-9 Walker (who leads the NBA in three-point attempts at 9.5 a game) is seventh at 24.6 ppg.

Boston is looking for its first playoff stint since 1995 (the longest current drought of any time in the East) and the first winning finish since 1993.

Pasig River Marathon Feb. 24

THE PASIG River Heritage Marathon takes off from the Manila Cathedral in Intramuros en route to the Global City of Fort Bonifacio on Feb. 24, 2002 starting at 4 a.m. Listing of participants is in full swing. There will be a 5-K fun run as side event of the race organized by the Clean and Green Foundation Inc.

SPORTS

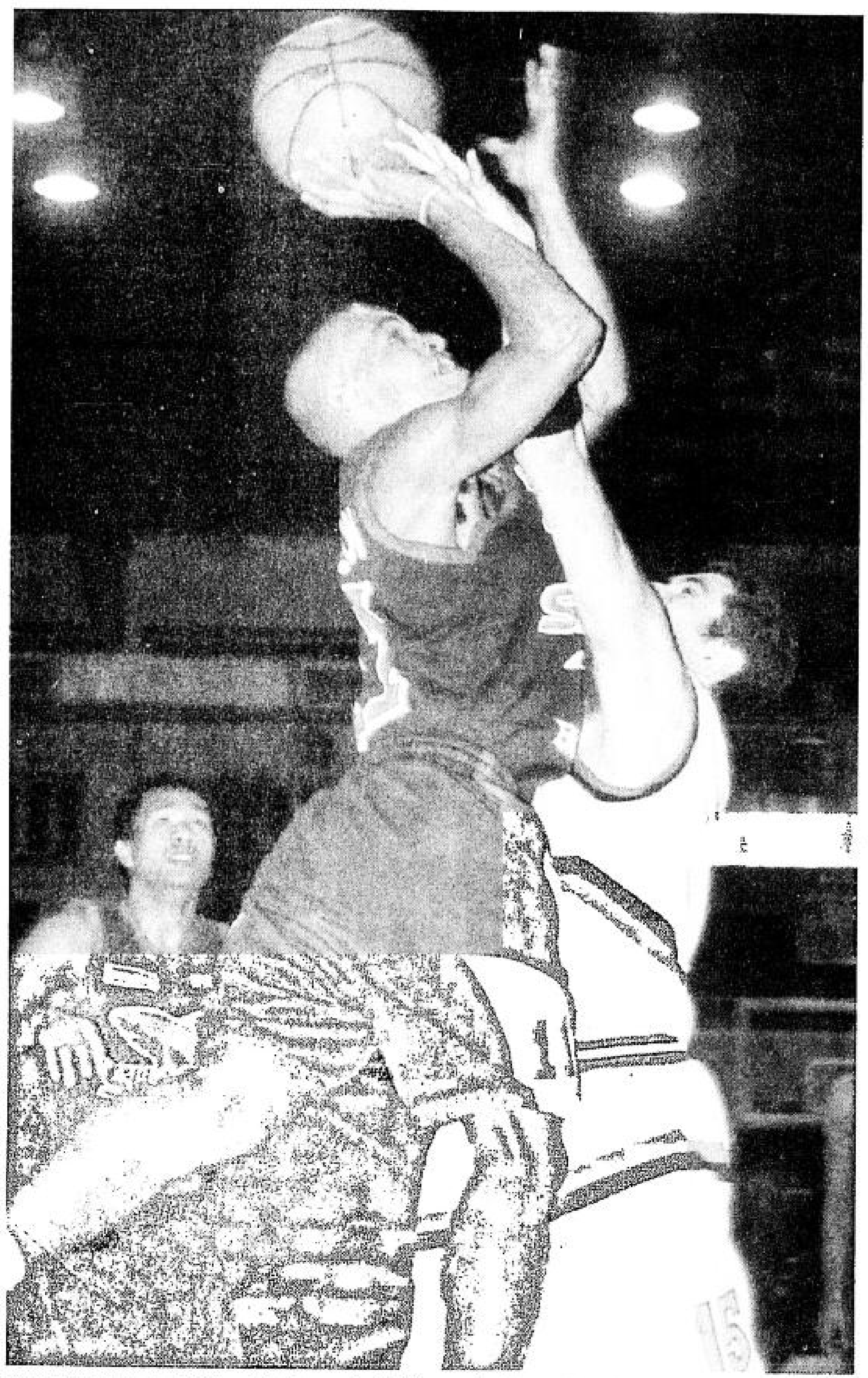
AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▣ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

McCain condemns Olympic 'excess'

WASHINGTON—Sen. John McCain condemned Salt Lake's Olympic spending and suggested billionaires who benefited from government spending should be the target of a federal investigation. The Arizona Republican said Thursday that he supported government spending on security, but much of the projected $1.5 billion in federal spending on the Olympics "has nothing to do with security." *AP*

PBL SEASON ENDER

Welcoat, 3 others chase q'final slots



SHARK playmaker Michael Robinson (left) fishes a foul from ICTSI-La Salle forward Dominic Uy in the PBL Challenge Cup on Thursday at the Makati Coliseum. Shark won, 59-55.
BETOY JOHNSON

By Dennis U. Eroa

FOUR teams hot in chase for quarterfinal slots hope for a merry Christmas vacation as they mix it up today in the second round of the PBL Challenge Cup eliminations at the Makati Coliseum.

Today's twinbill marks the end of the PBL calendar this year. The league resumes on Jan. 5. Two teams will be ousted at the end of the double round-robin elimination series with the top two finishers automatically advancing to the semifinals.

The remaining four teams battle it out in the crossover quarterfinals.

The 2 p.m. curtain-raiser pits Welcoat Paints against Ateneo-Pioneer and Ana Freezers against Kutitap Toothpaste at 4 p.m.

STANDINGS	W	L
ICTSI La Salle	7	3
Shark Energy	7	4
Blu Detergent	7	4
Welcoat	6	4
Ateneo-Pioneer	4	6
Kutitap Toothpaste	4	6
Ana Freezers	4	6
Montaña	3	9

GAMES TODAY
(Makati Coliseum)
2 p.m.—Welcoat vs Ateneo-Pioneer
4 p.m.—Ana Freezers vs Kutitap

Ateneo-Pioneer, Ana Freezers and Kutitap Toothpaste are tied in fourth place with 4-6 records. Welcoat (6-4) is eyeing to join defending champion Shark and Blu Detergent in second place.

"We want the automatic slots," said coach Junel Baculi, whose wards lost to the Insurers in the first round.

Ren Ren Ritualo, Jojo Manalo and Eugene Tan will stand at the forefront of Welcoat's attack. Leading Ateneo's attack are Leo Avenido, Edrick Ferrer, Miguel Noble, Larry Fonacier and Paolo Bugia.

Ana is also eyeing revenge against its first round tormentor. "I'm not going to question the desire of my players to win. But we have to do something about the zone," said Ana owner-coach Rudy Mendoza.

Firepower is the least of Ana's worry. Ronald Tubid, Roland Pascual, Dondon Mendoza and Ariel de Castro can explode anytime against a Kutitap team seeking consistency.

Ana crushed Blu Detergent, 96-83, last Thursday but is going up against a squad known for a suffocating, slow-break game and holding the distinction of beating titleholder Shark for twice this conference.

Slam dunking Cyrus Baguio, Allan Salangsang, Rency Bajar, Nino Gelig and Wesley Gonzales will banner Kutitap's assault.

Reyes wants to get Cariaso, Hawkins

By June Navarro

ONE of Pop Cola coach Chot Reyes' wishes once the San Miguel Corporation-owned Cosmos Bottling Corporation rehire him next season is to acquire Jeffrey Cariaso and Rene Hawkins of the fabled 1996 Alaska Grand Slam team.

Although it would be very difficult to rejoin Cariaso and Hawkins with former Alaska teammates Johnny Abarrientos, Poch Juinio and Jojo Lastimosa due to salary-cap restrictions, Reyes said bringing them over to the Panthers' camp is a possibility.

Cariaso and Hawkins have live contracts with Tanduay but will automatically be absorbed by Federal Express upon completion of the Rhummasters' PBA franchise sale.

Sources said Reyes, whose contract with Pop Cola expires on Dec. 31, already had a talk with FedEx officials expressing his interest on Cariaso and Hawkins.

But his dream of putting together Cariaso, Hawkins, Abarrientos, Juinio and Lastimosa, architects of the Alaska Grand Slam squad in 1996, under one roof would vanish if SMC find another coach for the Panthers.

SMC earlier purchased Cosmos Bottling Corporation lock, stock and barrel from the Concepcion-owned RFM Group of Companies, transferring Pop Cola's rights directly to San Miguel.

In a recent board meeting, the PBA Board of Governors approved the transfer of RFM's PBA franchise to Cosmos Bottling Corp., paving the way for SMC to own four teams in the league.

"Unfortunately this came up but should SMC find another coach, my only regret is that I failed to finish what I've started," said Reyes.

Pop Cola also owns two first-round draft picks—Nos. 2 and 8—next season, giving the Panthers the opportunity to pick the best players in the Annual Rookie Draft to be held on Jan. 13.

Meanwhile, the PBA will release the official list of 18 PBA cagers named by Asian Games coach Ron Jacobs to the national training pool today.

PBA insiders said Asi Taulava, Eric Menk, Danny Seigle, Danny Ildefonso, Rudy Hatfield, EJ Feihl, Don Camaso, Chris Jackson, Andy Seigle, Noy Castillo, Jeffrey Cariaso, Kenneth Duremdes, Marlou Aquino, Dennis Espino, Davonn Harp, Mick Penissi and Ali Peek are included in the list.

SILVER WINNERS

Archery president and Fita emeritus judge Ramon Lim (third from left) and members of the Philippine team display their trophy and medals for finishing a close second to Chinese Taipei in the compound event of the recent Asian championships in Hong Kong. Others in picture, from left are Earl Yap, Raul Ramon Arambulo, coach Bernard Yap, Adam Jimenez III and Nestor de Castro. Lim was also elected Asian Archery Federation first vice president. Other AAF officials are Korea's Hong Kong Jong Yu, president; Thailand's Sanguan Kosavinta, second VP; Chinese Taipei's Joseph Lin, third VP; Japan's Kotara Hata, treasurer; Korea's Um Sung HO, secretary general; and Singapore's Bill Wee, Malaysia's Baharuddin Jamil, Myanmar's Khin Shwe, China's Guo Bei and Bhutan's Dorji, council members.

Paete coaching clinic

THE BLUE Star Foundation and Spring Oil are joining hands with the Basketball Association of the Philippines in a two-day coaching clinic today and tomorrow in Paete, Laguna.

Supervising the cage seminar is veteran coach Johny Tam who will be assisted by coach Ching Ching Marcelino, coach Louie Cadang and his RP-FedEx young men's players such as Mark Pingres, Archer Calacar and Elvis Tolentino.

On Saturday, the clinic starts at 8 a.m. and ends at 12 noon at the Paete Town Plaza. At 7 p.m., the youth players will play an exhibition game against the Paete Selection. The following day, they take on the Siniloan All-Stars.

"We would like to thank the Basketball Association of the Philippines and FedEx chair Bert Lina, for lending their youth players to this noble cause of reaching out to the countryside," said Paete Mayor Elmoise Afurong.

Tam, whose players also visited Plaridel, Bulacan last week, said their Paete sojourn is part of the BAP's outreach program.

Interested participants to the clinic may contact Crispin Velasco, president of Blue Star Foundation at tel. 557-1019.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1994, Jennifer Rosales finished with a 319 total while Gerard Cantada closed out with a 625 to win their respective divisions and the team event in the 1994 Greg Norman Junior Masters in Queensland, Australia. Also today in 1995, NM Carlo Lorena scored back-to-back victories over IM Chito Garma and Fide Master Jesse Noel Sales to win the 4th Fabcon Active chess tournament at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

Ateneo, Holy Child of Davao rule Passerelle national meet

ATENEO de Manila and Holy Child of Davao emerged as the country's best youth basketball squads by winning the recent Milo BEST SBP/Passerelle national championships at the Philsports Arena.

The Ateneans nipped Cebu's University of San Carlos, 70-68, to grab the SBP crown, while Holy Child toppled USC anew, 89-80, in a repeat of last year's Passerelle finals.

Meynard Padernal drove strong for a left baseline layup with five seconds left to lift the Ateneans to victory. Padernal topscored for the champs with 26 points.

Rodel Ramises sparkled for Holy Child, finishing with 20 points.

Cagayan de Oro's Xavier University and USC-Cebu bagged the SBP and Passerelle sportsmanship awards, respectively.

The scores:

HOLY CHILD 89—Ramises 20, Somoso 13, Etrone 9, Wong 8, Guanino 8, Hermosisima 7, Naizamo 6, Asilum 6, Deria 4, Ebarola 4, Doromal 2, Pepito 2, Rosete 0, Lao 0, Manguilmotan 0.

USC 80—Macaraya 20, Yagaya 12, Demecillo 10, Salon 10, Esteban 7, Elemino 4, Gulle 4, Platero 4, Kor 4, Omped 2, Garcia 2, Singco 2, Lim 1, Gallarde 0, Mercado 0.

SPORTS ON TV

Compiled By Lorenzo Manguiat

POOL: World Pool League 2001 at 7 a.m. (r – 8 p.m. and midnight) on ESPN

BASKETBALL: NBA Inside Stuff at 8 a.m. (r – 6 p.m.) on Star Sports

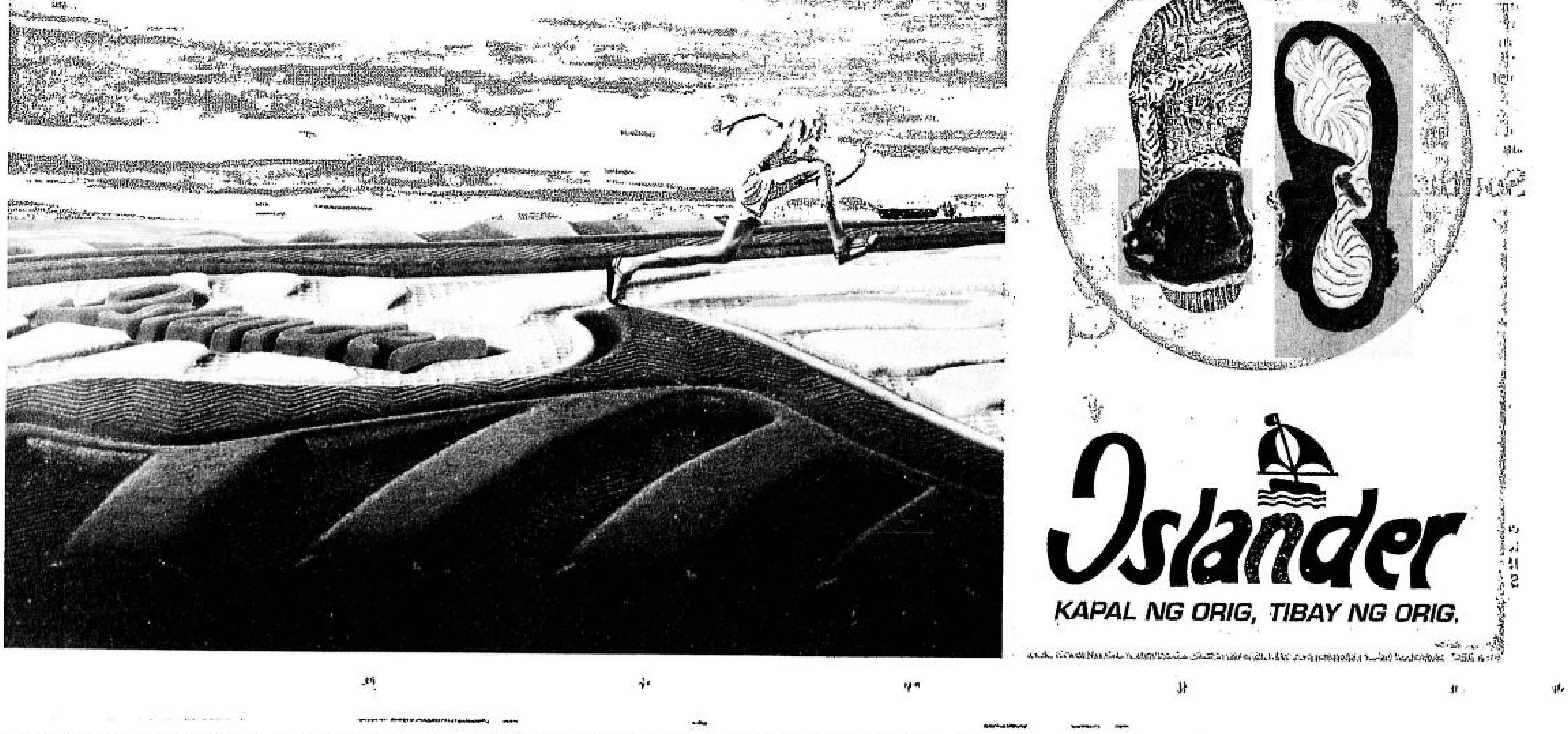
US NCAA - Tennessee vs Louisville at 8 a.m. (r), Maryland vs Oklahoma at 10 a.m., Wake Forest vs St. John's tomorrow at 1 a.m., Seton Hall vs Michigan State tomorrow at 3 a.m. on ESPN

NBA - Washington Wizards vs Orlando Magic at 8:30 a.m. (r – 6:30 p.m.) on Star Sports and LA Lakers vs Houston Rockets at 1:30 p.m. (r) on ESPN

GOLF: US Open Official Films - 1992 at 12 noon (r) on ESPN

U.S. Open Golf Championship, Final Round at 1 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

BILLIARDS: 2001 Trick Shot Magic at 9 p.m. (r) on ESPN



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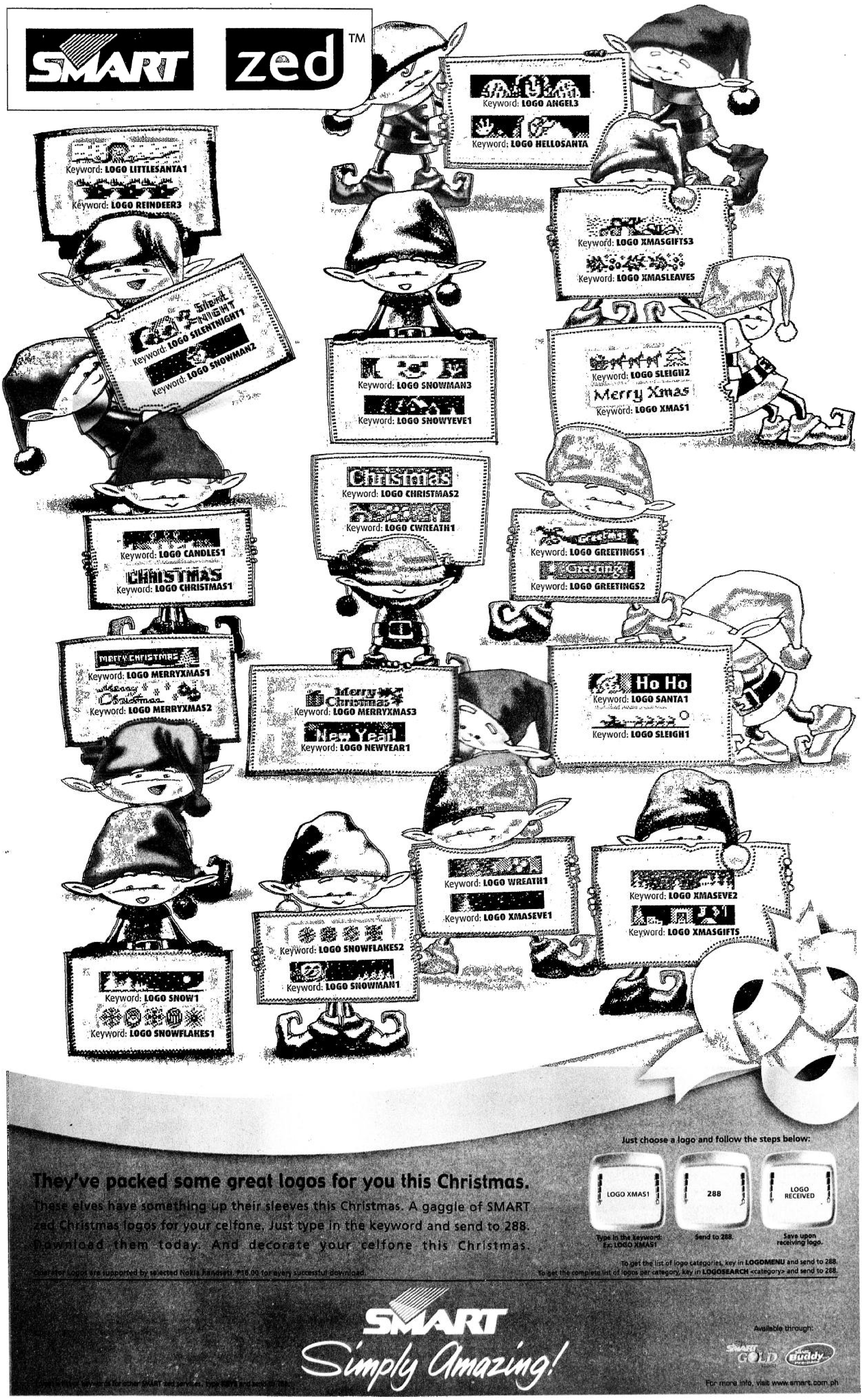
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Keyword: LOGO REINDEER3
Keyword: LOGO XMASGIFTS3
Keyword: LOGO XMASLEAVES
Silent Night
Keyword: LOGO SILENTNIGHT1
Keyword: LOGO SNOWMAN2
Keyword: LOGO SNOWMAN3
Keyword: LOGO SNOWYEVE1
Keyword: LOGO SLEIGH2
Merry Xmas
Keyword: LOGO XMAS1
Christmas
Keyword: LOGO CHRISTMAS2
Keyword: LOGO CWREATH1
Keyword: LOGO CANDLES1
CHRISTMAS
Keyword: LOGO CHRISTMAS1
Keyword: LOGO GREETINGS1
Greetings
Keyword: LOGO GREETINGS2
MERRY CHRISTMAS
Keyword: LOGO MERRYXMAS1
Merry Christmas
Keyword: LOGO MERRYXMAS2
Merry Christmas
Keyword: LOGO MERRYXMAS3
New Year!
Keyword: LOGO NEWYEAR1
Ho Ho
Keyword: LOGO SANTA1
Keyword: LOGO SLEIGH1
Keyword: LOGO WREATH1
Keyword: LOGO XMASEVE1
Keyword: LOGO XMASEVE2
Keyword: LOGO XMASGIFTS
Keyword: LOGO SNOWFLAKES2
Keyword: LOGO SNOWMAN1
Keyword: LOGO SNOW1
Keyword: LOGO SNOWFLAKES1

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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

'Juicy details' in Rod Strunk statement–NBI

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

THE HUSBAND of murdered actress Nida Blanca again figured prominently in the investigation of her death by the National Bureau of Investigation yesterday, despite the bureau's efforts to broaden its inquiry into the killing to include Blanca's close friends in show business.

Rod Lauren Strunk, Blanca's husband, recently called up not only the NBI but also the US Embassy to complain about leaks in the media concerning the contents of his 12-page affidavit, according to an NBI source.

But the source denied that the NBI was responsible for the leaks to the press and noted that the media would have had a field day with Strunk if the NBI had leaked the contents of the documents.

"There are many (juicy) items in his statements that, if leaked, would lead the media to feast on him," the official said.

He said the bureau learned that Strunk, an American citizen, called up the US Embassy and informed them that he "might be arrested soon."

Lawyer Ricardo Diaz, NBI spokesperson for the Blanca case, yesterday said the bureau still does not have enough circumstantial evidence to pin down a suspect.

In the absence of a witness, the bureau would need at least three pieces of convincing circumstantial evidence for a suspect to be convicted in court, Diaz said.

He said the bureau would take advantage of the Christmas break to interview witnesses and possible suspects.

On Thursday, Diaz said the NBI would invite Blanca's fellow movie stars Gina Pareño, Caridad Sanchez, Nova Villa, and Annabelle Rama.

"My Christmas wish is for the solution of the Nida Blanca case," Diaz said as employees of the bureau celebrated their Christmas party yesterday.

He said they are still trying to schedule a meeting with the police Scene of the Crime Operations (Soco) team that first arrived at the Atlanta Centre Building in San Juan where Blanca's body was found.

Diaz said the NBI investigators want to find out how the team inspected the crime scene, noting that there were many lapses (in their investigation) after viewing the police video of the first hours of the inquiry.

Besides the Soco team and Blanca's fellow actresses, her co-workers at the Movie, Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) would also be invited to go to the bureau, Diaz said. He added that Supt. Leonardo Espina is also expected to take the lie-detector test at the bureau about the disappearance of businessman Mike Martinez.

Strawberry boyfriend faces murder charge A22

QUIZON

MORENO

Vandolph home for Christmas

BY LEAH SALTERIO

ALMA Moreno's Christmas wish will come true.

Her son, Vandolph Quizon, who has been confined at the Makati Medical Center for more than a month now with serious injuries from a car accident, will be able to spend Christmas at home.

Vandolph, 17, who is Moreno's son with ace comedian Dolphy, is expected to be discharged from the hospital this weekend.

Vandolph has shown a lot of vital improvements since he emerged from his coma after the Nov. 17 accident in Pangasinan, according to people close to the family.

The young actor now talks and eats on his own, they said. He can also manage a few steps, one of them said.

Vandolph even asked for his cellular phone from the bodyguard who was also injured in the accident.

"He wanted to call up his school (Colegio San Agustin in Makati City) because he was worried about his absences," said a source close to the family.

"He eats anything he wants," added the source.

Vandolph, however, remains unaware of the death of his girlfriend, Desiree "Ishi" Raquiza, who was with him during the accident.

Raquiza, also 17, died Dec. 4 and was buried at the Manila Memorial Park on Dec. 9.

Last Wednesday, Vandolph was crying on the phone while he talked with his stepfather, Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez, who is Moreno's husband.

VANDOLPH/ A22

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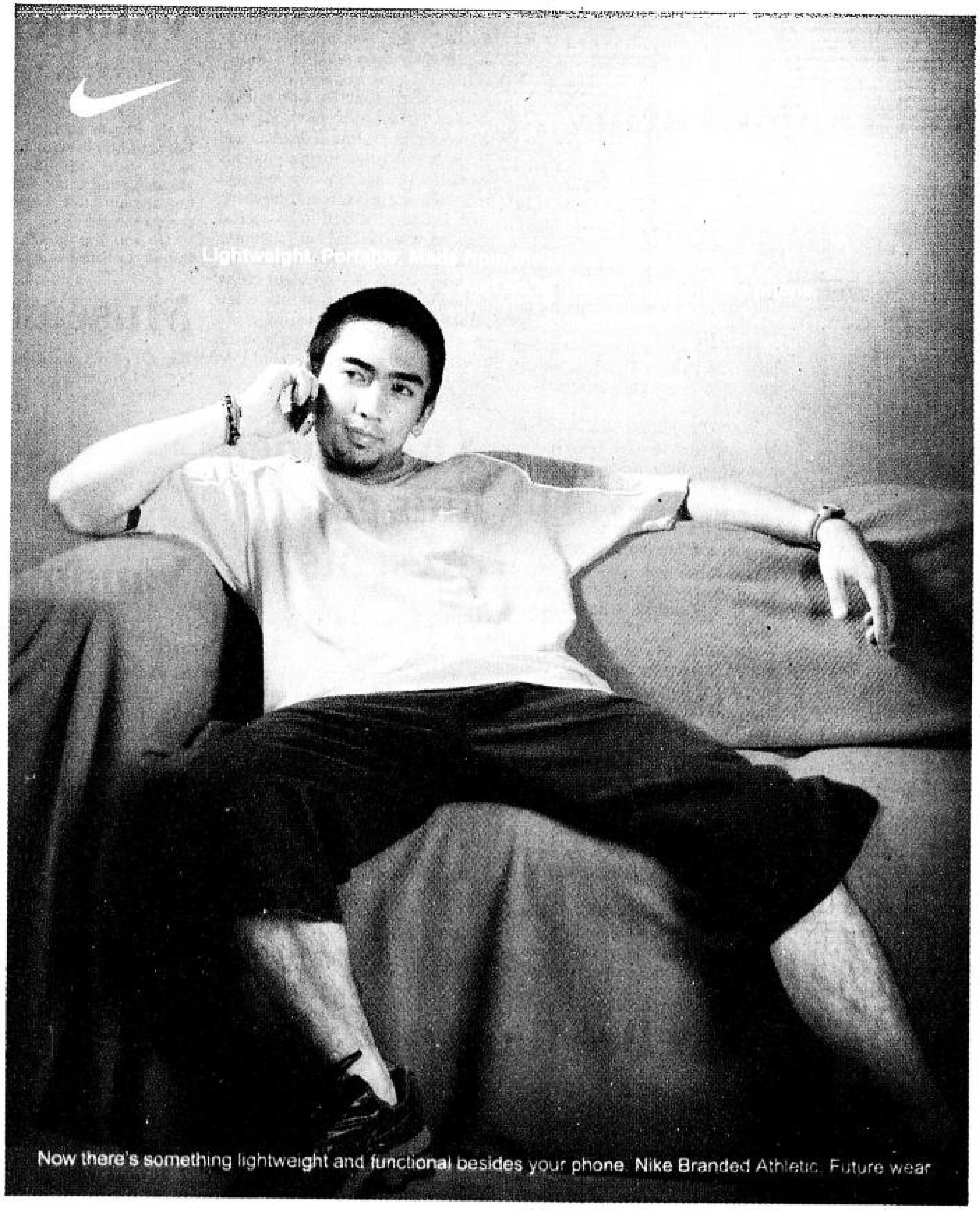
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Strawberry boyfriend faces murder charges

By Christian V. Esguerra

POLICE will file criminal charges against the boyfriend of former child actress Strawberry and his four security aides for her death on Thursday after she was shot in the head during a traffic altercation in Las Piñas on Tuesday.

Mark Doromal and his companions would be charged with attempted murder for allegedly shooting at the family of businessman Raynaldo Picar during the quarrel, said Insp. Sergio Gaarrobo, Station Investigation Division chief.

Doromal and his group might also be slapped with criminal charges for allegedly killing by mistake Strawberry, Anouk Baldo in real life, said Gaarrobo yesterday.

He said authorities are still waiting for Strawberry's father, Oscar Baldo, to file a formal complaint at the Las Piñas police.

On Thursday, Stawberry, who was in a coma, died at the Parañaque Medical Center. She was 25.

Her body was cremated yesterday at the Manila Memorial Crematorium in Parañaque. Her ashes were brought to the Christ the King Church in Green Meadows, Quezon City and would be there until Sunday.

Doromal's aides were identified as Marfie Arabani, Felicisimo Mardarlipe, Rex Tanduyan, and Alexander Memis.

The Picars accused Doromal and his aides of shooting at them during a confrontation early Tuesday morning, Gaarrobo said.

Police also said both groups were also involved in a petty traffic altercation earlier. But Doromal and his group allegedly tried to get back at the Picars last Tuesday and chased their Mercedes Benz van, police said.

Gaarrobo said Picar's wife and son, who were then on board the van, sped toward their house in BF Executive Village and instructed the security guard not to allow Doromal and his men inside the village. He said Picar and his other son proceeded to the scene.

Minutes later, Doromal, who was also with Strawberry in a Mitsubishi Lancer, invited the Picars to settle amicably their differences in a nearby clubhouse, Gaarrobo said.

He said the Picars accepted the invitation, but tempers flared again after they had gone outside the village to talk to Doromal's group.

Quoting the Picars' version of the story, Gaarrobo said Doromal acted as a "bait" and ran toward a nearby dark area where more armed security guards were supposedly waiting to ambush the Picars. He said that according to the Picars, they ran after Doromal, but retreated when fired upon repeatedly.

The Picars told police that as they were about to enter the village, they saw Strawberry driving the Lancer toward the dark area where her boyfriend was. Police said the Picars admitted they struck the car with baseball bats, thinking that Strawberry was about to run them over.

But when Strawberry reached the dark area, Doromal's group fired at her car, apparently thinking that it was the Picars who were on board the vehicle, the Picars told police.

A quiet New Year's Eve in Davao City

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

DAVAO City will usher in New Year 2002 without the usual fireworks.

The police will not allow firecrackers and other pyrotechnics to be exploded on New Year's Eve in the biggest city in the world (in area, that is). The firing of guns to welcome the New Year will not be allowed, either.

I was in Davao City a few days ago, and I didn't hear any firecracker explosion as a prelude to the New Year revelry.

***

Mayor Rudy Duterte, who has practically banned the New Year's Eve merrymaking, said, "These are not normal times."

Duterte said residents can make all kinds of noise like banging pots, tooting horns and having cars run around the city with empty cans in tow. Except firing guns and exploding firecrackers.

He said that some criminal and other elements might take advantage of the revelry. They might shoot at people or attack the city, their shots drowned by the noise of merrymaking.

"In the noise of the celebration, you won't know whether the explosions are those of firecrackers or guns," the controversial mayor said.

***

Duterte said that he has appealed (read: issued threats) to storeowners not to sell firecrackers to city residents. He said big business establishments, notably SM, have disposed of their big firecracker supply to stores and people who are from neighboring towns.

Persons caught exploding firecrackers, the mayor said, will be arrested and asked from whom they bought the firecrackers. Once the police trace the source, Duterte said he will have the store's business permit cancelled.

Many city residents are for the firecracker ban—at least for this New Year revelry. They agree with the mayor that "these are not normal times."

***

Former San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada should not mope in the corner over the Sandiganbayan decision. The ruling disallows him to go home for the traditional *noche buena* on Christmas eve.

Jinggoy might gorge on food, go on a drinking binge with visitors, chain smoke and feel overjoyed with his freedom. All these overindulgence might lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Already, "Jet Boy" Jinggoy is having a problem with his heart. The stress that he would undergo if he were to be given temporary liberty might put a very heavy burden on his diseased heart.

***

Therefore, having Jinggoy spend Christmas in his detention cell with his father, deposed President Erap, at the Veterans Memorial Hospital is a charitable act.

Saving a person's life is the greatest act of charity.

Both father and son can enjoy a quiet, tension-free Christmas with their families and close friends visiting them at their cell.

***

In turning down Jinggoy's request for bail, the anti-graft court did not believe his cardiologist, Dr. Robert Anastacio. Anastacio said that a hospital environment was too stressful for his patient. He said the best place for Jinggoy is a "normal environment," meaning his home.

Yeah, right! What the good doctor was saying is that Jinggoy might die at the Veterans Memorial because of the "highly stressful" environment in the hospital.

In fact, the safest place for a heart patient like Piggy Boy is a hospital. At the Veterans Memorial, Jinggoy has immediate access to doctors in case he suffers from a heart attack. Many people die of a heart attack or stroke in their homes.

So, Jinggoy, you should thank the Sandiganbayan justices for being so concerned over your health!

P20 parking fee in Makati City

SHOPPERS in Makati City have one more reason to be cheerful this Yuletide season.

Ayala Land Inc. has agreed to impose a flat rate of only P20 in its open parking areas no matter how many hours the vehicles would be parked.

This was announced by Sen. Rene Companero Cayetano who said this was conveyed to him by Ayala Land authorities in response to his request for the company to suspend or reduce the collection of parking fees in the spirit of Christmas.

The new flat rate is being collected from Dec. 15 to Jan. 15.

In a press statement, Cayetano expressed his appreciation to Ayala Land Inc. for acting on his personal appeal ''with dispatch and efficiency.''

''I commend them for their high sense of social awareness and public service,'' he said.

The Ayala Group is the single biggest operator of parking facilities in Makati.

In the 11th Congress, Cayetano had led an investigation of the legitimacy of the collection of parking fees by mall owners.

Then chair of the Senate committee on justice and human rights, Cayetano questioned the legal basis of the collection of the parking fees and the one-sided ''waivers of liability'' contained in the parking tickets.

The Solicitor General has filed a case with the Makati City Regional Trial Court raising the same legal question against the mall owners. *Rocky Nazareno*

Manila cops not reliable, says dad

By Jerome Aning

CHANGING the police leadership may not reduce Manila's alarming crime rate, but arming responsible citizens will, according to Councilor Julio Logarta Jr.

Logarta declared that the Western Police District "cannot be depended upon to prevent and fight crime as long as they are not under the control and supervision of the local government."

Logarta was reacting to suggestions that WPD director Chief Supt. Nicolas Pasinos Jr. be relieved of his post because of "poor performance."

In a phone interview, he insisted on his proposal that Manila residents be allowed to carry firearms outside their homes to deter criminals.

The sixth district councilor described the changing of leadership in the Philippine National Police as a "rigodon," a type of dance where participants change partners.

He noted that since he was elected councilor in 1998, the WPD steadily declined in performance. He said based on the account of his constituents, precinct commanders tend to be more concerned with making money than with preventing crime.

But the council's opposition leader, Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing of the fourth district, said Logarta's proposal to arm civilians would only cause lawlessness and more violence in the capital. Bagatsing said Pasinos deserved to be sacked because of his department's failure to control crime in the city.

Logarta said the problem of the police lay in their organization and structure. He said governors and mayors, being more familiar with the territory and population, could do better in utilizing the police force to fight crime.

Slain at LTO Christmas party

By Nelson F. Flores

AN ENRAGED Dante Tan shot his fellow employee at the Land Transportation Office during an office party after the latter pulled the chair from under him, police reported yesterday.

Tan shot dead Lucio Lubi, a stay-in license officer of the LTO and a native of Batangas, in front of horrified fellow workers and their families during the annual Christmas party in Cainta, Rizal Thursday evening, police said.

After the shooting occurred about 7:30 p.m. inside the Cainta Municipal Hall's LTO branch in Barangay Sto. Domingo, Tan escaped with his family on board a Toyota Corolla car (DAP 888), police said.

SPO3 Conrado Albano, Cainta police station desk officer, said that during the party, the suspect decided to stand and watch an on-going parlor game.

Unknown to Tan, someone pulled the chair from under him, Albano said.

When the suspect tried to sit back after watching the game, he fell on the ground, eliciting wild laughter from the crowd. Albano said Tan confronted Lubi, blaming the latter for the embarrassing episode.

According to Albano, Tan went to his office, took his .9mm semiautomatic pistol, went back to the party and shot the victim in the upper leg.

Witnesses told police that Lubi was begging for mercy when Tan fired his gun again, hitting the victim in the left chest.

"Tan fired a third shot and hit Lubi in the arm and, as he slumped on the ground mortally wounded, the suspect threatened to shoot everyone in sight before Tan escaped with his family in tow," Albano said in his report.

Police said Lubi was taken to the Ryan Anthony Hospital by his co-workers but he died along the way.

Albano said police are now looking for Tan, believed to be a resident of Karuhatan, Valenzuela City is now the subject of a police manhunt.

Scavenger shot, dies in mom's arms

CHRISTMAS Eve will be filled with grief for Neila Domingo. Her 21-year-old son Arnold D. Mendiola died in her arms on Thursday, shot allegedly by a man who had molested his wife.

Mendiola, a scavenger and a resident of Temporary Housing Unit Building 8 on Vitas Street in Tondo, Manila, died in his mother's arms after he confronted the man who molested his wife a month ago, said investigator SPO1 Virgo Villareal, of the Western Police District-homicide section.

The assailant, identified only as Kambal, shot Mendiola near the heart about 11 p.m. on Thursday inside the housing project, police said.

Earlier, Kambal allegedly mashed the private parts of Mendiola's wife, which led to a fight between husband and wife.

When Mendiola saw Kambal, who was said to have been hiding after the mashing incident, his blood boiled over. Police said Mendiola was walking toward his room in the housing building when he saw Kambal and flew into a rage. He tried to punch Kambal, who was armed with a handgun of unknown caliber, and shot Mendiola with it, police said.

As Mendiola slumped to the ground gasping for air, Kambal shot him, hitting him in the left side of his chest, police said. Kambal escaped after the shooting.

Domingo heard the shot and went out of her room, only to find her son sprawled on the cold concrete. She tried to save him by rushing him to Gat Andres Bonifacio Hospital. But before they could reach the hospital, Mendiola died as she cradled him in her arms.

Police said they are now trying to find witnesses who might be able to provide authorities with a clear description of the suspect. *Philip C. Tubeza*

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News that makes a difference

Abandoned kids get presents

ABOUT 80 abandoned children housed at the Reception and Study Center for Children, a child welfare arm of the DSWD in Bago Bantay, Quezon City, recently received Christmas gifts in the traditional gift-giving and feeding program of the Rotary Club of Metro Manila-San Francisco del Monte.

The children, aged 3-7, were given gifts during a Christmas party held at the center.

Club president John Aurellado said the event was part of their activities for December. Last year, about 20 children were baptized and club members stood as their godparents.

The center now houses 112 children, including infants. It was established in July 1967 to provide substitute parental care to children-at-risk seven years old and below.

Quiz Bee finals

THE brightest students of the country will be known during the grand finals of the 22nd National Super Quiz Bee on IBC 13 on Dec. 27, Thursday, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

It is the main highlight of the annual "Summit of the Super Quiz Bees" (SSQB) hosted recently by the Province of Cavite under the leadership of Rep. Gilbert C. Remulla, Gov. Ayong S. Maliksi and Vice Gov. Juanito C. Remulla Jr. at the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) Hostel and Conference Center in Tagaytay City.

The Quiz Bee is a flagship project of the Quiz Bee Foundation (QBF) in celebration of the Christmas season. The major sponsors are STI, Yakult and Uni-writing instruments and major donors Philippine Daily Inquirer, Junior Inquirer, Time-Life books, Papa Banana Catsup, JRS Express with Ahead Tutorial and Review Center and Banco Filipino.

Valbuena, 69

ARCHITECT Angel Valbuena passed away last Dec. 17 at the age of 69.

The late architect was a member of the Provincial Law Enforcement Board of Mandaluyong City. He was also vice president of the Mandaluyong police and fire substation and an active supporter of civic projects in the city.

He was one of the founders of Buklod, or Samahan ng Mag-asawang Iglesia ni Kristo.

Valbuena is survived by his wife Precilla, children Annabelle and Toybee Tapalla; Boy and Ayie; Ariel and Malyn; Tone and Aida; Ando; Ananiel and Anna; Albert, Zaldy and Sha Sha; and grandchildren.

His remains lie at the Funeraria Paz on Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment is at 1 p.m. today at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

Museum schedule

THE OFFICES and all galleries of the National Museum will be closed to the public from Dec. 24, 2001 to Jan. 1, 2002.

This is in compliance with the presidential proclamation signed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declaring the dates as holidays.

The long break will enable museum staff to conduct inventory, inspection and maintenance procedures on the exhibited artworks and artifacts and the structures themselves as well as to comply with austerity measures streamlining its operational costs.

The museum will resume regular operations on Jan. 2, 2002, with the same business hours.

For inquiries till Dec. 21, call Museum Education Division at 527-0278.

Vandolph home ...

(From page A21)

Marquez is now in the United States with his four children with Moreno.

"Umuwi ka na Daddy," Vandolph told Marquez.

Vandolph suffered multiple fractures in the accident. He is now undergoing therapeutic ultrasound to soften his muscles so they can be easily exercised.

His orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Antonio Rivera, said Vandolph has no need of casts and is now able to move his arms and his legs.

"All wounds are dry and free from infection," Rivera earlier said in a statement. "Once he recovers from his head injuries, there will be a long period of rehabilitation. But Vandolph is expected to walk normally and even play basketball."

Moreno said they don't plan to reveal to Vandolph what had happened to Raquiza.

"He may lose the will to survive once he learns about it," she said. "When he's strong enough and has fully recovered, that's the only time we will tell him."

Vandolph was driving a Ford-150 pickup on his way to Manila from Baguio, when his vehicle smashed into an eight-wheeler Elf truck in Pozorrubio town in Pangasinan.

Raquiza was pronounced clinically dead at the Makati Medical a day after the accident and later succumbed to internal brain hemorrhage.

Also injured were Vandolph's driver Allan Araza, and Ruel Biong, a former security guard of the Marquez family, who were in the back seat of the pickup.

Four other people on board the Elf truck were also injured.

Vandolph underwent an 11-hour operation at the Makati Medical. He was operated on the hips, the right arm and right leg.

The surgery was done in two sessions by eight surgeons and specialists gathered by Moreno, who is also suffering from multiple sclerosis.

Rivera explained that Vandolph's orthopedic injuries were an open-book type of fracture of the pelvis, a fracture and dislocation of the left hip, a complete fracture of the left thigh bone, the right leg bones and the right arm bone.

During the 12-hour surgery, "all fractures were successfully stabilized with nails, plates and screws," said Rivera.

"Fortunately, his multiple fractures will no longer be a problem in his recovery."

Composting: DOLE chief's labor of love

By Joey C. Papa
Contributor

LABOR Secretary Patricia Aragon Sto. Tomas composts her kitchen waste in 11 pots, which is the best arrangement she could devise in the limited space that her condominium unit allows.

Sto. Tomas starts by lining the bottom of the first pot with some soil from a source pot, puts in the biodegradable waste and covers it with more soil. She repeats this until the first pot is full, and then she goes on to the second, then the third, and so on until she gets to the 11th pot, the source pot for soil.

Since the last pot is already empty, she scoops some soil from the first pot whose contents by this time have been composted.

"I believe that segregation, composting and recycling is the most economical and most environment-friendly way to solve our garbage problem," Sto. Tomas said. "I hope local officials will fully implement the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act No. 9003)."

What does total resource approach to waste management have to do with labor and employment?

First of all, it is a proposal for empowerment, revolving around the concept of the best use of resources, including waste. This empowerment strategy involves educating the people to make them fully appreciate space, time, energy, material and spiritual resources. Hand in hand with this is the need to engineer these resources so that they are effectively put to the best use, based on a system of enforcement that will reward the proper use of resources and discourage and prevent wastage. The system uses low-cost, labor- and employment-generating and life-sustaining and –enhancing technologies.

> 'I believe that segregation, composting and recycling is the most economical and most environment-friendly way to solve our garbage problem,' Sto. Tomas said. 'I hope local officials will fully implement the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act No. 9003)'

STO. TOMAS

A major goal is the achievement of entrepreneurship, which would create livelihood opportunities, especially among the poor, as well as increase productivity and improve the quality of life.

Waste retrievers should be considered productive forces whose labor deserves the dignity given those in regular jobs or engaged in enterprises. Given micro-finance packages, they can even go into livelihood projects and cooperative formation, networking for markets, training to be "eco" managers and technicians.

A continued and adequate supply of clean and segregated "retrievables" from "eco-centers," also referred to as redemption centers or the Materials Recovery Facilities, will further encourage livelihood enterprises and provide more materials for the recycling industry while continuously developing and refining local and people- and environment-friendly activities.

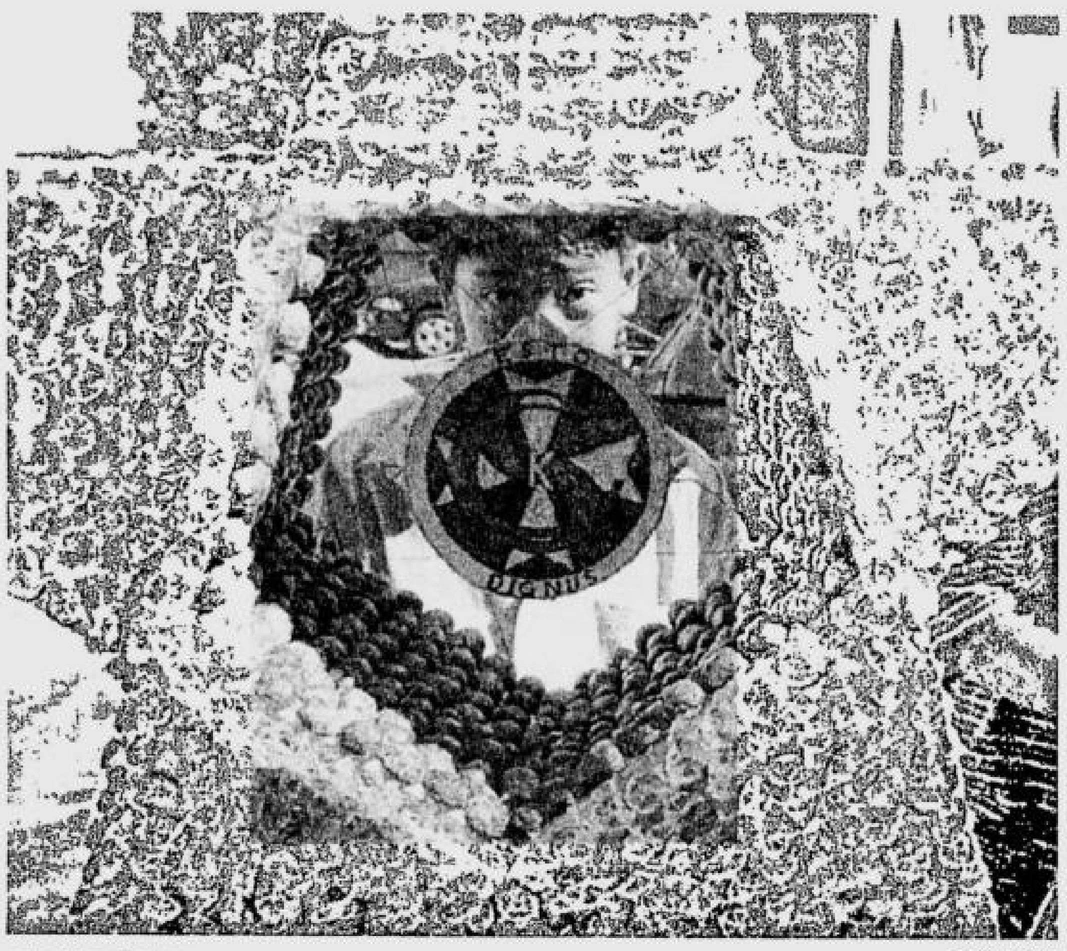
A thriving industry that produces organic fertilizer from household and community compost will enhance other livelihood enterprises and encourage technologies for increased food and agricultural production. Seeds from

households can supply seedling banks, for example.

A resource-Aconscious bureaucracy, such as in the Department of Labor and Employment, will be able to better implement programs to make its services less wasteful, more simple and truly responsive to the needs of the people it serves.

Sto. Tomas is aware that this total-resource approach is easier said than done.

"While the situation is far from ideal, we are doing much better than the stronger economies in the region," the labor secretary said of the country. "We must learn to believe in our capacity to solve the problems brought about by external developments over which we have very little control. We must work hard and think positively." *(The author may be reached at bangon_kalikasan@skyinet.net.)*


ERIK ARAZAS

SOUR STAR
This Christmas lantern that participated in a lantern parade in Intramuros, Manila is one that proponents of recycling would love to hang in their homes. The lantern is made of "calamansi."

7 cops charged with killing 4

By Nelson F. Flores

GOVERNMENT prosecutors have filed multiple homicide charges against seven policemen who shot dead four suspected communist rebels in an alleged encounter in Rizal province two months ago.

Charged before the Antipolo City Regional Trial Court were Senior Insp. Ericson Dilag, PO2 Ronald Cuya, PO2 Ernesto Bautista, PO2 Gatmar Jatalis, PO2 Pablito de la Cruz, PO1 Glen Salcedo and PO1 Crispin Cultinio, all members of the PNP-SAF based in Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan Taguig.

The charges were filed on Wednesday.

Records showed that the policemen were on a mission to monitor a suspected NPA training camp in Sitio Casunugan, Antipolo City, a remote mountainous area near the boundary of Rizal and Quezon provinces, last Oct. 20 when they accidentally encountered four men armed with shotgun rifles.

The suspected communist rebels—Raul Maguiza, 38; Dominador Aniceto, 36; Emiliano de la Rosa, 48, and Reynaldo, 26—allegedly engaged Dilag and his men in a gun battle and were killed in the process, a charge vehemently denied by the victims' relatives.

Joel Egco, a nephew of Maguiza and a reporter of Manila Standard, said the four men were simple farmers who were on a hunting spree. He said there are signs the victims were tortured before being shot at close range.

Egco, who is also the PNP Press Corps president, noted that contrary to the claims of the seven suspects that the victims used automatic rifles in the gun battle, only four shotguns, three of which were homemade, and three live shotgun bullets and one spent shotgun shell were recovered at the alleged encounter site.

"It appears that the four victims had only one bullet each," Egco said. "How could they have engaged the suspects in a shootout?"

He said all of the victims suffered gunshot wounds in the feet, which is highly unusual if an encounter really took place. He said gun battle wounds, as recent PNP and AFP experience in Basilan showed, are usually located in the head and torso.

Barangay San Jose chair Edilberto Lagasca also confirmed that the suspects were mere farmers on a hunting trip.

But police said an autopsy conducted on the slain victims belied Egco's claim that they were tortured.

Manila should be left alone in writing history, says dad

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA councilor who believed city residents have the right to preserve and record their city's history and cultural heritage has filed a proposed law to create an independent Manila Historical Commission.

"The city should be left alone in writing and preserving its history," said Councilor Ricardo Isip of the fifth district.

Isip was referring to the recent squabble between the city government and the National Historical Institute over the historicity and boundaries of the 140-year-old Mehan Gardens.

City Hall wanted to erect a new campus for the City Colleges of Manila on the Mehan but the NHI, which is under the Office of the President, countered the city government's move, saying the law does not allow the alteration of any place declared historical.

The NHI's predecessor agency declared the Mehan—Manila's first zoological and botanical garden—as historical in 1934.

But City Hall refuses to acknowledge this.

Last week, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza opened to the public the controversial three-story parking building, which the NHI claimed was constructed on a portion of the Mehan Garden.

The eight-member MCH will be in charge of publishing source books on city history, identifying historical sites, acquiring collections and memorabilia of prominent Manila residents, and supervising historical activities and researches.

Isip said the new MCH will be composed of a chair and four regular members, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. They must be born in Manila, are current residents of the city and adept in historical research and writing.

The city chief librarian, the head of the history department of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and the city legal officer will be ex oficio members of the commission.

Although the MCH will be under the direct control and supervision of the mayor, the councilor said the body will be "independent" as it will comprise a separate department of the city government with a budget of P500,000.

He said the city government will heed the commission's rulings on future disputes concerning the city's history.

Cavite teachers denounce 'abuses'

FIVE teachers of a public high school in Imus, Cavite have sought the assistance of Cavite Gov. Ayong Maliksi in ridding the province of what they described as "abusive" school officials.

According to a statement from Maliksi's office, teachers Cynthia C. Aguilar, Felanie J. Rodriguez, Cristina B. Manesca, Elizabeth Z. Villanueva and Marites Penaredonda, all of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo High School, wrote the governor a letter accusing their superiors of conniving to cover up for a fellow teacher they had sued for grave threats on Oct. 26.

"We are signing this letter to prove our readiness to fight anomalies," the five teachers, writing in Filipino, told Maliksi in their five-page letter dated Nov. 3.

They told the governor that on Oct. 26, they filed a criminal complaint with the Municipal Trial Court of Imus against a fellow teacher, Lucinda Villa, who, they alleged, poked a hunting knife at one of them during a meeting on Oct. 26.

Maliksi said that long before he assumed office as Cavite governor last July 2, he was already hearing stories and reports of irregularities, influence-peddling and even widespread corruption in the provincial school system.

"This is the first time that somebody has named the school officials they are complaining against," he said in his statement. "I salute these five teachers from Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo High school for coming out in the open to denounce these abuses allegedly perpetrated by their superiors. If only for their courage, they already deserve a medal."

In their letter to the governor, the teachers accused the school division superintendent, Dr. Leonora Ignacio, her assistant Aravella Ramos, Aguinaldo OIC-principal Paulita G. Zafra and fellow teacher Lucinda Villa with "conduct grossly prejudicial to the best interest of the service."

Maliksi said it all started with a reported violation of the Department of Education's memo of zero collection for which, it was learned, Dr. Ignacio was suspended once.

He said an anonymous letter circulated in the school alleged that Villa was collecting P35 from her students who did not want to use "Coke in can" in their projects. Villa suspected that the five teachers were behind the circulation of the letter, the governor said.

The school guidance counselor, Jose Samson Jr., and Villa called the suspects to a meeting in the faculty room. Only Aguilar and Rodriguez attended it. Aguilar and Rodriguez were later seen running from the room, the complaint said.

The two said Villa got mad when they did not answer her question as to who started the complaint against her collecting money from her students. They said she banged the table with a piece of wood before unsheathing a hunting knife, the complainants alleged.

Zafra immediately called another meeting with the five teachers in attendance. The complainants said Villa again wielded her hunting knife and even poked it at Manesca.

In the ensuing investigations, the division office in Trece Martirez City sent Ramos first. But Ramos, the complaints said, tried to dissuade them from filing a criminal complaint against Villa and from seeking the governor's assistance, they said.

Maliksi later learned that some students of the school had also written Education Secretary Raul Roco regarding Villa's alleged collection of P35 from her students as well as her smoking inside the classroom.

Ignacio denied not having taken action after the knife-wielding incidents.

On Nov. 22 or 27 days after the incident, Ignacio submitted to the DEC Region IV director the recommendations of her fact-finding committee that Villa be punished for her action and in the meantime be given preventive suspension.

Manesca was recommended to be transferred to another year level.

FILSCAP WINS COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT CASE AGAINST TEAM IMAGE

The Filipino Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (FILSCAP) wins its case for "Infringement of Copyright and Damages" against Team Image Entertainment, Inc. represented by its President, Felix Co. Team Image staged "Dionne & Burt... Close To You" on June 11, 12 and 13, 1997 at the PICC Plenary Hall without securing a public performance license from FILSCAP. Judge Reynaldo Daway, Regional Trial Court Judge of Quezon City's Branch 90, rejected the defenses and counterclaims of Team Image due to its failure to substantiate its defense arguments.

FILSCAP is a non-stock, non profit corporation which represents the public performance, mechanical reproduction, synchronization and publishing rights of its members. It also represents those same rights of foreign composers affiliated with foreign collecting societies like ASCAP and BMI in the United States through reciprocal agreements.

It was learned that prior to the staging of "Dionne & Burt... Close To You" in June 1997, FILSCAP demanded that Team Image secure a public performance license covering the 28 songs or musical works belonging to ASCAP and BMI which were to be performed during the concert. The license fee, amounting to P253,825.50, was computed based on FILSCAP's standard formula and guideline on live concerts. Team Image pushed through with the concert without securing the appropriate license. Despite FILSCAP's demand for Team Image to pay the license fees/royalties after the concert, Team Image chose to ignore payment. FILSCAP, through its counsel Pimentel Yusingco Pimentel and Garcia Law Office, filed a complaint to protect the interest of the songwriters it represents as well as its contractual obligation with foreign performance societies.

In its ruling, the court stated that Team Image clearly "infringed on the copyrights assigned to and administered by FILSCAP when it staged the concert without any authority or license." The court also ruled that FILSCAP presented sufficient evidence to justify its claims for infringement and that it finds the claims for unpaid license fees and royalties, attorney's fees plus cost of suit and exemplary damages as proper and equitable. The court ordered Team Image to pay FILSCAP P253,825.50 in unpaid license fees/royalties; P50,000.00 in attorney's fees plus cost of suit; and P200,000.00 in exemplary damages.

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2	EARTHQUAKE	in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	WOLF GIRL	in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	THE MUSKETEER	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	MONSTERS, INC.	in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE SCORE	in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	SUMMER CATCH THX	in DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	BEST OF CINEMANILA 2001 Art Film	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	MVP: MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE	in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	HARRY POTTER	in DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	ROCKSTAR	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

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3	BEST OF CINEMANILA 2001	in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	REGINE AT THE MOVIES DEC. 21, 22, 28, 29, 30 Onstage	

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2	MVP: MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE	in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE SCORE	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	MONSTERS, INC.	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	HARRY POTTER	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
2 (SDDS)	MUSKETEER
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4 GOLD (DTS)	ROCKSTAR
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	THE SCORE
6 GOLD (SDDS)	SUMMER CATCH
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
8	SERENDIPITY
9	EARTHQUAKE
10	WOLF GIRL

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	
3 (DTS)	NAIIBANG HAYOP
4	
5	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
6 (DTS)	

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	NAIIBANG HAYOP
3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	MAGIC DRAGON BALL
2	FIREBALL JACK
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	WOLF GIRL
5	ALIPIN NG TUKSO

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	BOLD AFFAIR
2	TALONG
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	WOLF GIRL
6	MAGIC DRAGON BALL
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1	RESERVE

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	KAPITAN AMBO
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	RESERVE
2	BOLD AFFAIR
3	NAIIBANG HAYOP

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	NAIIBANG HAYOP
A	ALIPIN NG TUKSO

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
3	NAIIBANG HAYOP
4	BOLD AFFAIR

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8500

1 (DOLBY)	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	MUSKETEER
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	WOLF GIRL
7 (DTS)	RESERVE
8 (SDDS)	SUMMER CATCH
9 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	WOLF GIRL
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 (SDDS)	RESERVE
5	MUSKETEER
6 (DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8	RESERVE
9	RESERVE

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4	RESERVE
5 (SDDS)	WOLF GIRL
6	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
7 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
8	RESERVE

Ortigas
tel 656 6795

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	RESERVE
5 (SDDS)	RESERVE

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Dilson
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1	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001
2	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001
3	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001

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(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	NAIIBANG HAYOP
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	MAGIC DRAGON BALL

Baclaran LRT LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	
2	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
2	NAIIBANG HAYOP

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	NAIIBANG HAYOP
2	ALIPIN NG TUKSO

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna) tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	MVP
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3 (DTS)	SUMMER CATCH

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	MVP
2 (DTS)	GLITTER
3 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
4	SUMMER CATCH

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	EARTHQUAKE
2 (DOLBY)	MVP
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	SUMMER CATCH

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	IRON LADIES
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	TIKIM
2	ROCKSTAR
3 (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	MAGENTA
2	NAIIBANG HAYOP
3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
4 (DTS)	BOLD AFFAIR

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	EARTHQUAKE
2	MVP
3 (DTS)	SUMMER CATCH
4	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
5	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	BAKIT DI TOTOHANIN
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2568

1	BAKIT DI TOTOHANIN
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	TALONG
2	ROSARIO 13
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	EARTHQUAKE
2	MVP
3	SUMMER CATCH

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531 4808

1 (DTS)	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2 (DTS)	

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	MVP

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5002 to 03

1 (DOLBY DS)	MUSKETEER
2	THE SCORE
3	JOY RIDE
4 (DTS DS)	GLADIATOR

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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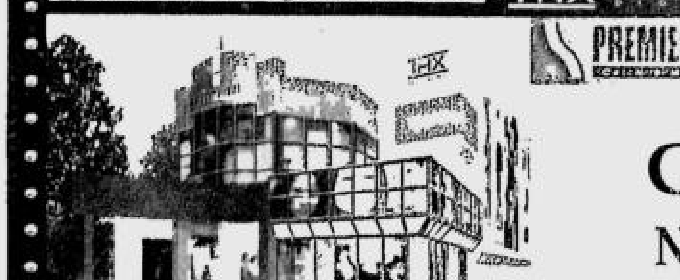

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3	THE SCORE
4	WOLF GIRL
5	SUMMER CATCH
6	EARTHQUAKE
7	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
8	MUSKETEER
9	CHOCOLAT
10	RUSH HOUR 2

ERMITA
536-7809 TO 13

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	WOLF GIRL
3	THE SCORE
4	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	HARRY POTTER
7	MUSKETEER

METRO EAST
632-9116-16 / 633-7641

1	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2	HARRY POTTER
3	THE SCORE
4	MONSTERS, INC.
5	MUSKETEER
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	RUSH HOUR 2

NOVALICHES
936-0229 TO 31

1	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2	SUMMER CATCH
3	WOLF GIRL
4	WOLF GIRL
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	MUSKETEER
7	HARRY POTTER
8	MONSTERS, INC.

IMUS
(046) 471-8188

1	HARRY POTTER
2	EARTHQUAKE
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	MUSKETEER
5	PISNGI
6	WOLF GIRL

BACOLOD
(034) 441-0453 / 0458

1	HARRY POTTER
2	MUSKETEER
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	JOY RIDE
5	DON'T SAY A WORD
6	CAPT. CORRELLI'S

ILOILO
(033) 336-0077 / 0078

1	HARRY POTTER
2	ROCKSTAR
3	TIKIM
4	IRON LADIES
5	HARRY POTTER
6	ROCKSTAR

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SUTLA (RE-ISSUE)
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	MUSKETEER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	EARTHQUAKE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	MVP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	SUMMER CATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	PISNGI
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MARITAL RAPE / EROTIC DIARIES
ODEON	EARTHQUAKE
ODEON-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
ROBEN	PISNGI
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	PUKYUTAN / STORY OF US
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	PUKYUTAN
REMAR	PISNGI
REMAR-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	NAIIBANG HAYOP
B	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-2	THE MUSKETEER
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	ROCKSTAR
CINEMA-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
CINEMA-3	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE SCORE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MONSTER, INC
CINEMA-6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
CINEMA-7	SUTLA (RI)
CINEMA-8	PISNGI
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	EARTHQUAKE
CINEMA-12	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
CINEMA-14	MUSKETEER
CINEMA-15	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	THE MUSKETEER
CINEMA-2	MONSTERS, INC
CINEMA-3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-4	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-5	RUSH HOUR 2
CINEMA-6	THE SCORE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Food and music festival

GREENBELT holds a food and music festival, "Moonlight Serenade," featuring new restaurants with live musical entertainment from jazz to classical performers, tonight at the Greenbelt 2 open grounds, facing the new park and The Plaza building.

Featured performers tonight at Bo Razon and Puro Ritmo.

Participating restaurants are Italliani's, Gloria Mari's, Sugi, with the new ones like Uva, Pepato, Bizu Patisserie, Kit Creole and Restaurant 12.

Show starts at 7 p.m. Admissions is free.

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2	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
3	HARRY POTTER
4	EARTHQUAKE
5	WOLF GIRL
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	BOLD AFFAIR
8	FIRE BALL JACK

SM CENTERPOINT
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1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	ROCKSTAR
3	HARRY POTTER
4	EARTHQUAKE
5	MUSKETEER
6	WOLF GIRL
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	PEARL HARBOR
9	THE SCORE
10	ALIPIN NG TUKSO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
3	CLOSED
4	HARRY POTTER
5	MUSKETEER
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	THE SCORE
9	EARTHQUAKE
10	CLOSED
11	PEARL HARBOR
12	WOLF GIRL

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	MONSTERS, INC.
2	THE SCORE
3	SERENDIPITY
4	SUMMER CATCH
5	ROCKSTAR
6	HARRY POTTER
7	DREAM GIRL
8	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
9	MUSKETEER
10	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
11	EARTHQUAKE
12	WOLF GIRL

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2	MONSTERS, INC.
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4	FINAL DESTINATION
5	THE SCORE
6	SUMMER CATCH
7	BOLD AFFAIR
8	MUSKETEER
9	WOLF GIRL
10	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
11	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
12	ALIPIN NG TUKSO

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1	WOLF GIRL
2	MUSKETEER
3	ROCKSTAR
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	THE SCORE
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	HARRY POTTER
9	DREAM GIRL
10	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
11	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
12	MONSTERS, INC.

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2	THE SCORE
3	HARRY POTTER
4	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
5	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
6	MONSTERS, INC.
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	SUMMER CATCH
9	MUSKETEER
10	WOLF GIRL

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2	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
3	WOLF GIRL

SM CEBU
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2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	HARRY POTTER
4	DREAM GIRL
5	GLITTER
6	IRON LADIES
7	JEEPERS CREEPERS

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1	TIKIM
2	CLOSED
3	ROCKSTAR
4	BUBBLE BOY
5	IRON LADIES
6	DREAM GIRL
7	CLOSED
8	HARRY POTTER

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1	HARRY POTTER
2	THE SCORE
3	SERENDIPITY
4	KING OF GLADIATOR
5	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

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1	SUMMER CATCH
2	SERENDIPITY
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PEARL HARBOR

SM DAVAO

1	THE SCORE
2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	HARRY POTTER
4	GLITTER
5	ROCKSTAR
6	JEEPERS CREEPERS

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Pasay slashes ₱17 M from city budget

By Christian V. Esguerra

A BLEAK year awaits Pasay City as local officials revealed that they slashed an estimated P17 million from the city government's budget for 2002.

The city government will have to make do with its P1.183-billion budget due to lower revenues and tax collection this year, said lawyer Ernestina Carvajal, Pasay city administrator.

Pasay has a P1.2-billion budget for 2001.

Carvajal blamed the budget cut on the global economic turmoil triggered by the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, Pasay's growing debt, and the non-payment of land taxes by government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs).

"Whether we like it or not, we were affected by the terrorists attacks," Carvajal told reporters. "It had a domino effect on many economies."

Pasay, she said, owes the Philippine National Bank around P150 million and has to remit around P80 million to the Social Security System.

The city government has found it hard to settle its debts, partly because GOCCs such as the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, the Light Rail Transit, and the Public Estates Authority, have yet to settle their tax obligations, Carvajal said.

Naia owes Pasay around P750 million in unpaid land taxes, while the LRT and PEA have standing obligations worth around P395 million and P61 million, respectively, according to Carvajal.

In what could be a prelude to the gloomy year projected for Pasay, city hall employees will not be receiving their usual cash gifts and gift bags for Christmas, the city administrator said.

The local government, she said, would usually borrow P30 million from the PNB to pay for the employees' bonus and other gifts for the holidays.

Pasay did not make that loan this year, she added.

Last month, Carvajal issued a memorandum asking all city hall employees to conserve electricity and office supplies, as part of the city government's austerity measures.

LAND FOR THE LANDLESS

Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur C. Abalos congratulates beneficiaries of his Land for the Landless program after he recently signed the Deed of Absolute Conveyance for Land for 118 residents along the old Philippine National Railways and Fabella Street in Plainview.

Patrol 117 goes nationwide

THE DEPARTMENT of Interior and Local Government will expand the coverage of Patrol 117, a hotline for reporting crimes, accidents, fires and public disturbances.

Col. Filipino Amoguis, Executive Director of Patrol Development Group said the coverage would be expanded to the countryside.

"We are now looking forward to organizing the local barangays in the different cities and municipalities," said Amoguis.

Patrol, an acronym for People's Action Team Responding On-Line, is the local version of America's 911. It's also the mechanism that will integrate the community and private sector with public safety agencies in government, Amoguis said.

DILG Secretary Joey Lina also stressed the role of the PNP, the BFP and the BJMP in ensuring public safety. He admitted that government depended on meager resources where crime prevention and control are concerned.

"We lack manpower in the police force," Lina said, citing statistics indicating that government was far from having the ideal ratio of one policeman to every 500 residents; or one fireman to every 9000 community members.

"This is why we need to organize, mobilize and monitor the communities for this program to be effective," he said.

Amoguis said Patrol held a seminar for about 100 representatives from 21 cities in 14 regions, including the Cordillera Autonomous Region, to introduce them to the program.

Representatives from the national police and fire bureau, as well as DILG officers, also participated in the Atomm Team Training Course at the Local Government Academy Training Center in Los Baños, Laguna, he added.

Atomm, which stands for Advocacy, Training, Organizing, Mobilizing and Monitoring, will oversee the implementation of Patrol in the barangays of different cities and municipalities.

"These men and women will introduce Patrol 117 to the barangays, organize the members of the communities, and make sure of its performance," Amoguis said in explaining the Patrol Training.

The Atomm unit will be responsible for consolidating the activities of each barangay organization such as the Barangay Patrol, the Barangay Emergency Respond Service (for emergency situations) and the Citizens Patrol Movement, which will handle intelligence information as well as pacifying conflict in the community.

"Since these are people within the community, they will be able to respond to any given situation immediately, even before the arrival of the police or the firemen," Amoguis said. "The participation of the barangay can enhance the performance of public safety agencies like the police and fire bureau."

A merrier holiday for UP community

By Agnes E. Donato

WORKERS of the University of the Philippines will have a merry Christmas after all as the university administration decided to give each employee a P10,000-holiday bonus.

The bonus, which was P3,000 more than the amount earlier demanded by the All-UP Workers Union, benefited about 13,000 employees in all UP campuses nationwide.

Union president Buboy Cabrera said UP workers received the first P5,000 early last week while the rest of the amount was released on Thursday.

The increase in the Christmas bonus came after President Macapagal-Arroyo issued an executive order allowing heads of government agencies and government-controlled corporations to give "extra Christmas bonus" to their employees.

"This will be a happy Christmas for us UP employees after all," said Cabrera, who earlier led hundreds of UP workers, faculty members and students in protest actions to demand a bigger Christmas bonus.

But Cabrera noted there were certain guidelines in the distribution of Christmas bonus which he found "a bit unfair."

He cited a provision stating that all employees who were not in service as of Dec. 14 would not be covered by the Christmas bonus. Those who had been in service for at least four months as of the same date could avail of the bonus.

"This may not be a big issue, but we find it a bit unfair for those who had served the university for a long time but happened to have retired, say, on Dec. 13," Cabrera explained.

He said those who had been sentenced for any administrative offense were also excluded in the Christmas bonus, even though they had already served their respective penalties.

Still, Cabrera said he was happy about the "union's victory," attributing it to the collective strength of various sectors in the UP community.

Mob kills robbery suspect in Las Piñas

By Christian V. Esguerra

AN ANGRY mob yesterday killed a man whom they took for a thief in Las Piñas City, police said.

Residents in Talon Uno, Las Piñas thought Rogelio Fortello, 30, was a thief and ganged up on him, stabbing him repeatedly in the back about 2 a.m. yesterday in Miranda Compound, police said.

Police said Fortello, of Green Valley, Molino, Bacoor, was stabbed several times in the back and died hours later at the Las Piñas District Hospital.

According to investigators, village watchmen arrested Fortello on suspicion that he was a thief after he was supposedly seen roaming Miranda Compound in Talon Uno early yesterday morning.

Village watchmen later informed the Las Piñas police about the arrest.

But when policemen arrived, they saw Fortello's bloodied body slump on the pavement.

Police said angry residents had apparently taken matters into their own hands and killed Fortello.

Dead on his birthday

By Philip C. Tubeza

DRIVER Jhon H. Ferrer, 36, ended his birthday celebration Tuesday by committing suicide in Manila.

Ferrer, of Alinoin Street, Tondo, Manila was found dead in the two-story house of his live-in partner, Patricia, said SPO1 Benito Cabatbat of the Western Police District homicide section.

Cabatbat said he is still trying to find out what led Ferrer to kill himself since the victim did not leave a suicide note. But he added that Ferrer had no permanent job.

Patricia, of Corcuera Street, Tondo, told investigators the last time she saw Ferrer alive was at 9:40 p.m. inside her house.

The victim asked permission from Patricia if he could go downstairs to be alone.

Patricia said she did not notice anything wrong when she said yes to Ferrer.

She said she became suspicious later when Ferrer failed to return upstairs. After waiting for an hour, Patricia suddenly heard a loud thud. She quickly went downstairs and was shocked to see the man hanging by the neck.

Patricia screamed at the sight of her dead companion. Her neighbors quickly went to her house to see what was wrong.

Kagawad Randy Mendoza of Barangay 82, Zone 7, District 1, Manila helped Patricia's neighbors untie the knot around Ferrer's neck and took his body to the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

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SUMMER CATCH - P 13 11:00, 1:10, 3:25, 5:40, 7:55, 10:10	RUSH HOUR 2 - P 13 11:20, 1:25, 3:30, 5:35, 7:40, 9:45	THE SCORE - R 18 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00

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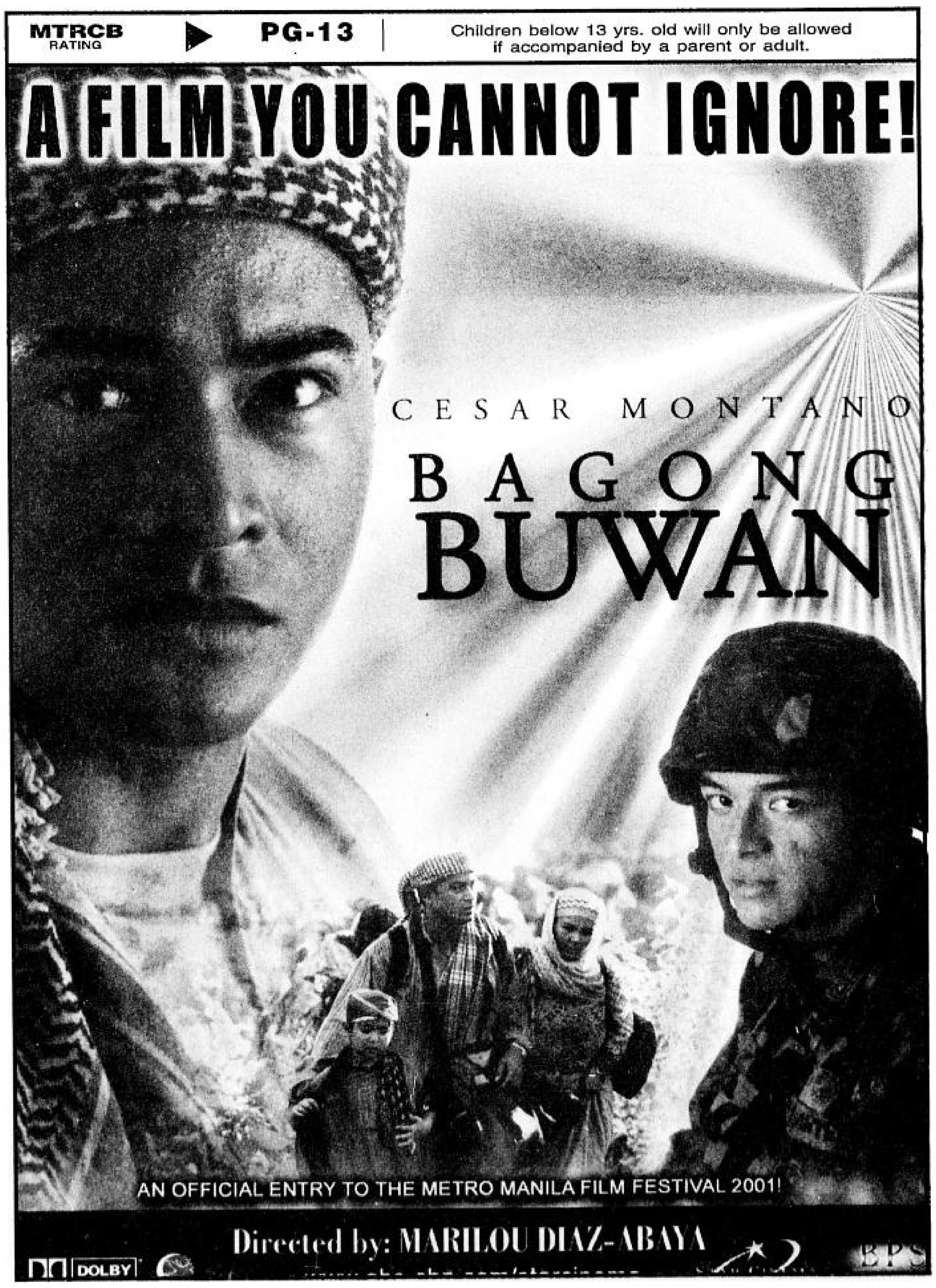
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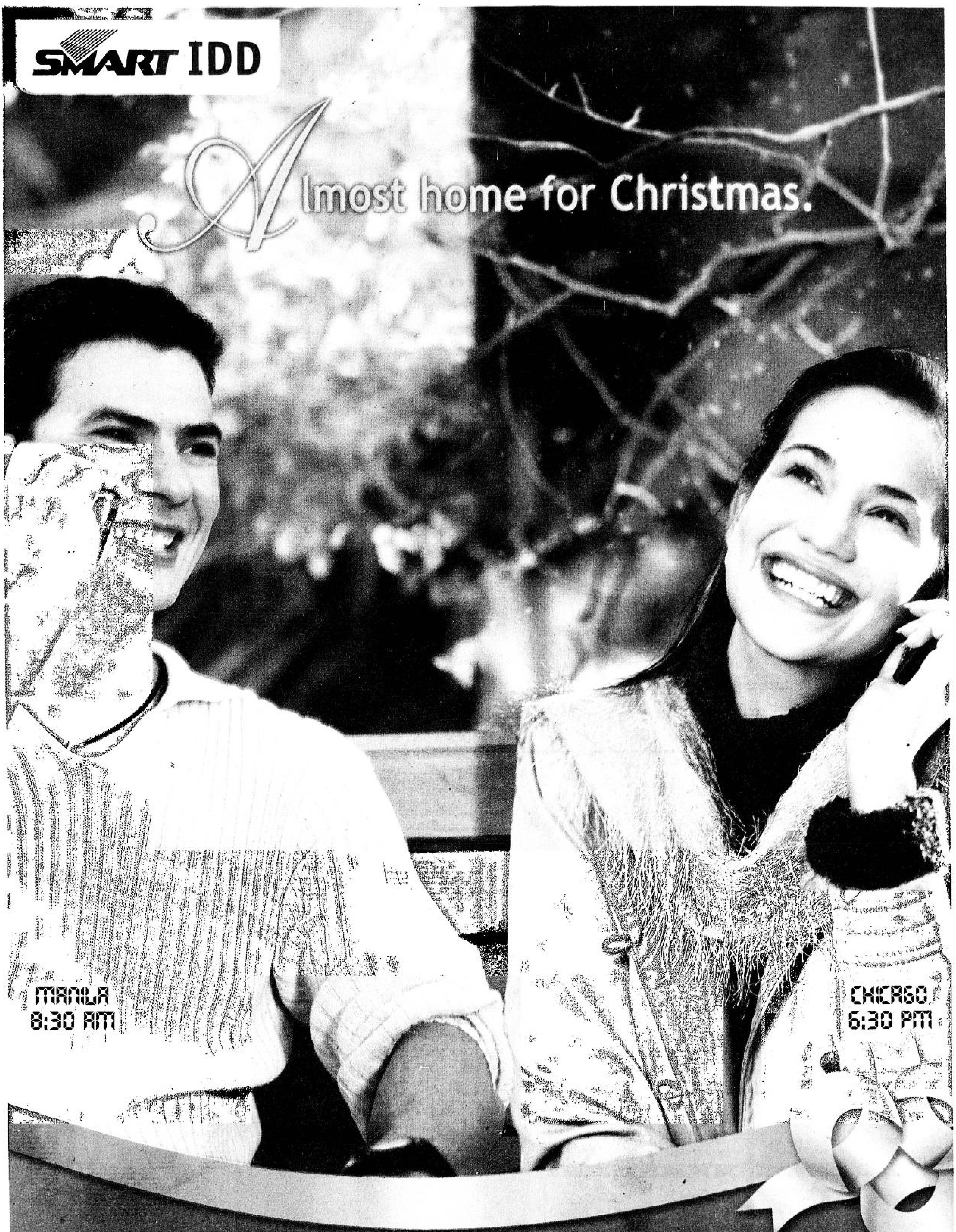
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RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ▨ CORRIE S. NARISMA, Assistant Editor

Sumitomo buys stake in Lopez power firm

By Doris C. Dumlao

JAPANESE trading giant Sumitomo Corp. is acquiring a 3.81-percent stake in First Generation Holdings Corp., a power generation unit of the Lopezes' First Philippine Holdings Corp. for about P1 billion ($20 million).

The buy-in deal followed the $40-million investment made by AIDEC FG Power Corp. Ltd. in exchange for an 8-percent stake in First Gen, a transaction which was completed in August this year.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, FPHC spokesperson Ernesto Rufino Jr. said Sumitomo had agreed to subscribe to 430,801 common shares and 387,967 preferred shares in First Gen.

A subscription agreement was signed last Thursday, Rufino said, alongside a shareholders agreement that sought to regulate certain aspects of their relationship as shareholders in First Gen.

Sumitomo of Japan is into general import and export practices, with interests in commodity, media, electronics, business information, consumer services, retail, transportation and information technology.

First Gen owns power plants in Sta. Rita, San Lorenzo and Bauang in La Union province, and in Panay. The facilities have a total capacity of about 1,800 megawatts. It is the third biggest player in the electricity industry.

The power generation businesses of FPHC contributed P2.29 billion of the P2.46 billion in consolidated gross profits of publicly listed parent firm First Philippine Holdings Corp. during the third quarter of the year. This, combined with a significant interest income, had neutralized the 77-percent drop in equity earnings arising from losses of Rockwell Land Corp. and reduced profits from Manila Electric Co.

The sale of a stake in First Gen was among the measures mapped out by the Lopez group to raise funds to reduce its consolidated debts.

First Gen was supposed to conduct an initial public offering this year to give foreign firms a minority stake in it. However, the company ruled out an IPO due to the downturn of the local economy.

First Gen president Peter Garrucho earlier said that the IPO was "not possible within the year" and that it was "still a long way off."

"The financial environment should first be strong. (Right now) the market is weak," he said.

First Gen is valued at more than $500 million.

"(Our attraction is that we are) a holding company for four power plants and that we have a growth story," Garrucho said earlier.

He said the acquisition of more power plants would depend on whether the firm would be able to buy one of National Power Corp.'s generation companies or gencos.

Napocor would start the privatization of its assets early next year.

Garrucho said they were looking at a Luzon-based genco in view of the natural gas industry in Batangas, where the yield from the Malampaya gas fields would be landed.

3 bankers eyed as PNB prexy

By C. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT has short-listed three seasoned bankers to become the next president of Philippine National Bank, but sources said the most likely replacement for Feliciano Miranda Jr. was Isidro Alcantara, president of Philippine Bank of Communications.

The two others being considered are Octavio V. Espiritu, former president of the defunct Far East Bank and Trust Co., and Ramon Sy, president of International Exchange Bank.

PNB chair Norberto Nazareno declined to comment on the names but said the government and the group of Lucio Tan would jointly select the next chief executive officer once the term sheet has been signed.

The term sheet that serves as a prelude to the memorandum of agreement details the debt-to-equity conversion of the P25 billion in advances the government had extended to PNB. It also tackles the rehabilitation of the bank and an exit strategy for the state and Tan.

Nazareno, who is also president of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., would soon give way to Edward Go, former president of Asian Banking Corp., who had been named as the next chair of PNB.

The PDIC official also said Tan had agreed to resign as chair of the executive committee to give way to the government's choice, Florencia Tariela, former undersecretary of finance and an incumbent director.

The PDIC chief would be among the six directors to be appointed by the government to the country's sixth largest bank.

Miranda, a nominee of Tan, would have to give way to a government appointee once the MOA had been signed, Nazareno said.

Miranda, a former deputy director of the central bank, was tapped by Tan to head PNB on a "transitional basis."

Stocks end higher on gov't optimism

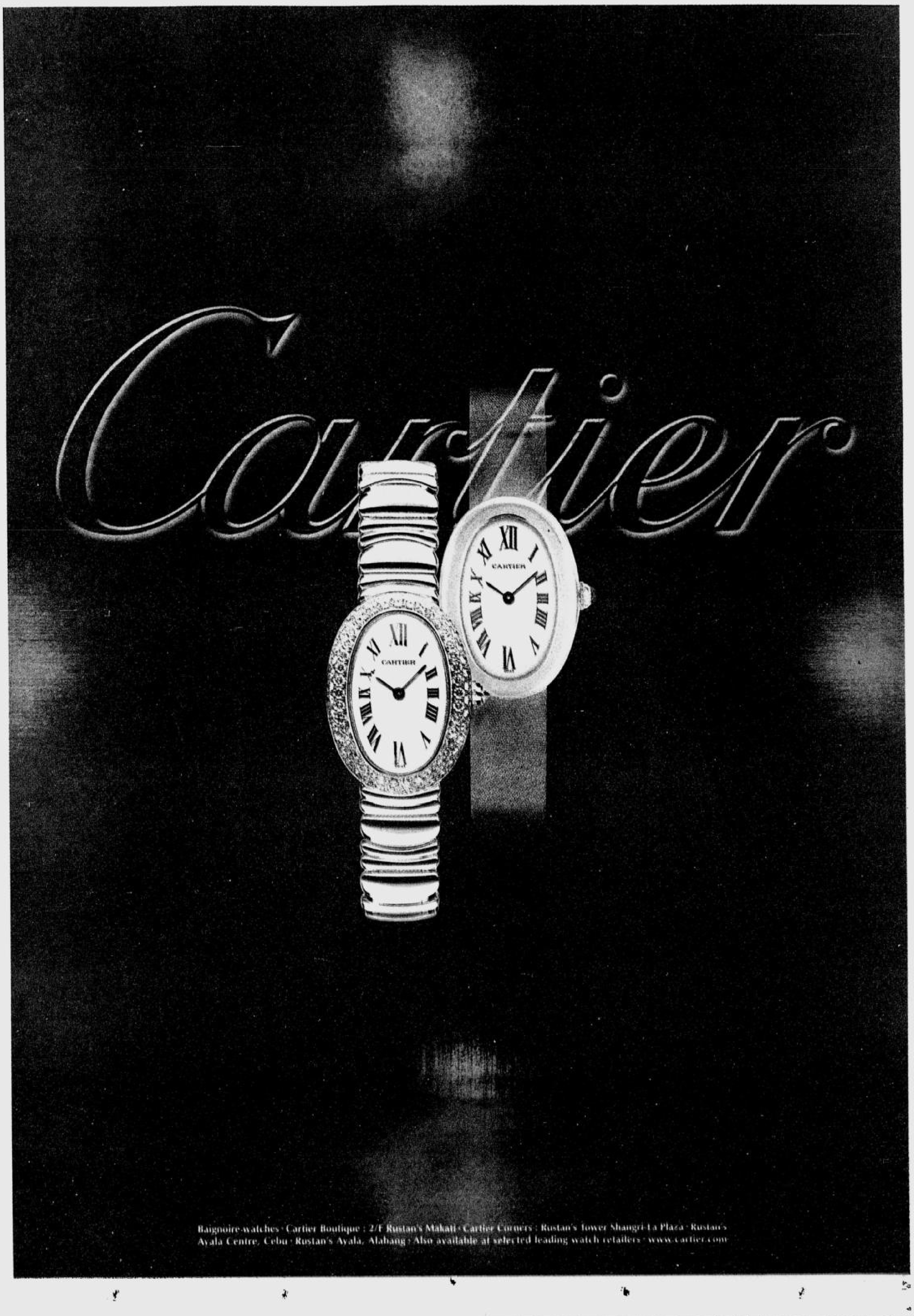
STOCKS ended higher yesterday on a wave of positive sentiment generated by President Macapagal-Arroyo's yearend economic report delivered Thursday, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 6.10 points, or 0.5 percent, at 1,145.97, adding to a one-percent rise Thursday. The index has already gained nearly 2 percent since Wednesday.

Turnover fell to 262.49 million shares but value rose to P531.34 million from 638 million shares worth P372 million on Thursday.

The discovery of 20 kilos of ammonium nitrate explosive in the fi-

STOCKS/ B3



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Tighten your bird

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

WHAT does Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho think he is doing?

Imagine, he has admitted publicly that we have long-standing debts with SGS. This is the Societe Generale de Surveillance, the Swiss import-inspection company. For about two years now, it cannot collect from the government only around P6 billion.

I know that, his being the Whiz, he can be creative in managing this cute administration's finances, but he doesn't have to say that we must still pay SGS. He may as well say that, in our dealings overseas, we ought to be trustworthy.

What does he think we all are—saints? Ha, trustworthy!

* * *

During the time of the man named Band . . . Wrist Band . . . , the government already recognized the SGS' P6-billion claim. Good for us, the Wrist Band administration hired a lot of toughies.

So they just dribbled the SGS around. They never paid for the claim. And now the Whiz says we still have to settle those debts. This guy must be crazy! He may as well announce to the whole world that we are nothing but just a bunch of softies.

I just don't know if the Whiz wants us to become the laughing stock of the world. This, unfortunately, the Whiz doesn't grasp: Tough guys don't have to pay their debts.

* * *

FOR here we are, trying our best to destroy our image abroad, with the famous Abu Sayyaf kidnappings, plus a lot more by ordinary, run-of-the-mill kidnapping syndicates and, thank heavens, we manage to keep peace and order as our biggest problem.

After all that hard work, the Whiz now says it's time to project a more pleasing image overseas. He wants to show everybody that we still honor our debts.

What a hopeless do-gooder! What a time for the Whiz to show a weakness! And that is, he doesn't play ball!

His confirmation before the powerful Commission on Appointments is still hanging. Everybody expects him to play politics. He must be careful in speaking his mind. He must also show willingness to kiss some A's—if you know what I mean.

Unfortunately, the Whiz doesn't realize that SGS made a lot of enemies, both in and outside the government, precisely because it exposed their rackets.

What will those enemies do now that the Whiz, instead of giving SGS nothing but promises, says we have to settle the debts? You think they will lobby for the Whiz? Good luck!

* * *

AND all for what? So that we can float some IOUs in Europe? Is that it?

I know that we are staring at huge budget deficits every year for the next four years. I also know that we have to borrow a lot of money abroad to cover for the deficits. We can always just tighten our belts.

For it doesn't necessarily mean that, since we are in dire need of money, we have to get good interest rates on our foreign borrowings. It doesn't follow. Duh!

Can't you see, Presley, that by settling the debts with SGS, we can only hope to polish our international image as a sovereign borrower? This can then help our credit rating overseas. We then can ask, even demand, for good rates when we borrow. Yuck!

For as everybody knows, low borrowing rates are only for the spineless!

We can still deal with high interest rates. After all these years of hardship, we can still bear some more punishment from our foreign creditors. Charge us with some more killer rates, guys! Is that all you've got?

* * *

ACCORDING to reports, by the way, how we can expect better times ahead. No more belt tightening? I mean, how can we know that?

Well, our economic managers say that our economy may not be showing spectacular results, but at least it is in a better shape than most others in Asia. You know—It's like the consolation prize. Some chewing gums.

Indeed, our economy is posting growth while the star-performers of Asia, such as Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong, are going through recession.

Our savior happened to be agriculture. The sector is expected to post double-digit growth this year. It covers up for the slack in exports and other sectors. Sure, that's a major accomplishment for this cute administration.

Nobody even admits that such an impressive growth in agriculture cannot happen overnight. That we must have done something right in the past.

Say what you will about the Wrist Band administration, but at least it invested heavily on irrigation systems. In its two years in power, that administration invested more on irrigation than all the years of Tita Cory and Kuya Eddie—combined.

Sad to say, that was the bird . . . este, baby, of Sen. Edgardo Angara, who insisted that the Wrist Band administration could tighten on everything but not on its outlay for agriculture.

But Angara doesn't deserve any credit. By golly, last time I checked, he still belonged to the opposition, didn't he? That answers it.

FedChem lists shares in lackluster trading

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

SEALANT maker Federal Chemicals Inc. yesterday made a quiet debut on the Philippine Stock Exchange as its share price rose by 10 centavos from its offering price of P7 on a thin trading volume.

Analysts said FedChem, the third and last company to launch an initial public offering (IPO) in the battered stock market this year, did not excite investors who were yesterday more preoccupied with the nearing long Christmas holidays and the bomb scare in the Makati central business district.

FedChem said in its prospectus that even in the worst of times, there was still enough business in selling sealants and adhesives, but analysts thought that the offering price, for one, was quite expensive.

Others said it was simply a case of bad timing.

"It was a good company doing an IPO at the wrong time," Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said. "If it listed on the heydays of the PSE before the 1997 financial crisis, its share price would have surged."

"Now, there are a lot of companies out there with single-digit price-earning ratios while FedChem has something like 20 times PE ratio," he said.

Other analysts from local brokerage firms said the offering price might have been overpriced, specially since they knew that the company's principal shareholders subscribed to new shares at only P1 earlier this year.

FedChem, which listed on the PSE's second board, generated net proceeds of P81.9 million, which would be used for working capital and partial retirement of debt. It offered around 12.5 million common shares or 33.35 percent of its post-IPO shares.

The PSE's second board is devoted to companies with a minimum authorized capital of P100 million, of which P25 million must be subscribed and paid up.

FedChem is optimistic about its growth prospects, especially with the fresh funds from the IPO. It is projecting a 42-percent growth in business over the next two years with the additional working capital from the IPO. The prospectus said competitive pricing and better credit terms would be the main revenue drivers.

It said proceeds from the initial public offering would help it to directly import raw materials and thus be more competitive in its pricing. With additional working capital, it also noted that it would be in a better position to extend liberal terms of payment to customers.

Although a new entrant in the sealant-adhesive industry, FedChem claims having cornered a market share of 15 percent of the industry, pricing its products about 20 percent lower than the price set by the market leaders.

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DISCLOSURES

THE BOARD of **Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.** approved the payment of 3-percent cash dividends or P0.30 for every share to all stockholders as of Jan. 2, 2002.

* * *

ROXAS Holdings Inc. repurchased 300,000 common shares at the price of P0.81 per share.

* * *

SINOPHIL Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Feb. 18, 2002. Record date is set on Jan. 10, 2002.

* * *

CENTRO Escolar University purchased 10,000 CEU shares at P8.90 per share and 25,000 CEU shares at P9.00 per share.

* * *

EQUITABLE PCI Bank Inc. disclosed that it has plans to consolidate some branches of Ecology Savings Bank to the network of Equitable Savings Bank to rationalize the operations of the thrift banks' subsidiaries.

* * *

ELECTED as directors of **Guoco Holdings (Philippines) Inc.** were Felipe Yap, David Go, Micky Yong, Victor Say, Yuen Po Seng, Ricardo Romulo and Daisy Parker.

* * *

THE STOCKHOLDERS of **WILLIAM, Gothong & Aboitiz Inc.** approved to reclassify the capital stock into common and redeemable preferred shares and the declaration of the redeemable preferred shares as stock dividend.

* * *

RFM Corp. disclosed that the target date for the Cosmos transaction has been deferred to next week. The final date of closing will be announced as soon as the closing documentation has been completed.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Union Bank of the Philippines** accepted the resignation of Miguel B. Varela as director effective Dec. 31, 2001.

* * *

LIBERTY Telecoms Holdings Inc. is not aware of any information that caused the decrease in the price of its shares on Dec. 20. *Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, December 21, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58	58.5	57.5	58	607,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	24.25	25.5	24.25	25	1,623,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	189	189	185	187	16,280
Philippine National Bank	62	67	62	67	107,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	20	20	20	20	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	16.25	16.5	15.75	16	27,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	15.5	16.25	15.25	16	209,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	220	240	220	240	110
Manulife Financial Corp.	1310	1315	1310	1315	890
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1070	1070	1050	1060	21,440
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.25	24.25	24	24	4,200
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	660,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	600	605	600	605	13,300
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	412.5	422.5	412.5	420	68,650
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	26,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	23	23.25	23	23	77,100
Manila Electric Co. B	31	31.5	31	31.5	1,135,100
Petron Corp.	1.5	1.52	1.48	1.52	2,933,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2	2.08	2	2.08	3,933,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	100,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Cement Corp.	0.65	0.75	0.65	0.75	950,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	28,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	3,800
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	23	23.25	23	23.25	14,000
RFM Corp.	2.24	2.4	2.22	2.4	7,815,000
San Miguel Corp. A	42.5	43	42	42.5	1,459,200
San Miguel Corp. B	52.5	53	52	52.5	481,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	40,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.71	0.73	0.7	0.7	290,000
Ayala Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.65	3,756,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	180,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.76	0.7	0.76	1,060,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	20,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.62	0.64	0.61	0.64	4,500,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	700,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	400,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	1,100,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	7,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	252,200
Global Equities Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	200,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	10,000
Ionics Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	113,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.71	10,060,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	120,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	2,610,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.34	5,850,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	220,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.81	0.81	0.8	0.8	350,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.5	4.7	4.2	4.7	120,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.33	0.33	40,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	150,000
Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	80,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Federal Chemicals Inc.	7.4	7.4	7	7.1	214,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	161,900
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.47	0.57	0.47	0.53	4,870,000
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	17	17	17	17	1,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23	23.75	23	23.5	2,630,700
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.72	1.92	1.72	1.9	927,000
RFM Corp.-Pref.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.005	0.0055	0.0048	0.005	94,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	9	9	9	9	51,000
Far Eastern University	400	400	400	400	40
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.65	7,145,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	1,530,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	280,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	230,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.8	1.82	801,000
SM Development Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	12,154,000
Urbancorp Realty Dev. Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	20,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	90,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.55	0.6	0.55	0.6	70,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	2.7	3	2.7	3	51,000
Omico Corp.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	5,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.015	0:015	0.015	0.015	3,000,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	21,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	5,000,000
Pacifica	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	2,625,620	113,312,900.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	201,350,590	305,658,210.00
PRO	22,260,000	111,770,250.00
Mining	8,211,000	279,500.00
OIL	28,000,000	173,400.00
GRAND TOTALS:	262,447,210	531,194,260.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	492.92	UP 6.79
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,555.29	UP 8.16
PRO	491.70	DOWN 3.97
Mining	1,027.21	UNCH 0.00
OIL	1.97	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	689.23	DOWN 7.01
Composite	1,145.97	UP 6.10

NO. OF ADVANCES: 30; NO. OF DECLINES: 22; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 31; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 83; NO. OF TRADES: 2,232

CURRENCIES

Dec. 21, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.110001	1.000000	51.2350
Japan	Yen	0.008639	0.007783	0.3988
United Kingdom	Pound	1.609391	1.449900	74.2856
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.142491	0.128370	6.5770
Switzerland	Franc	0.681150	0.613648	31.4403
Canada	Dollar	0.703156	0.633473	32.4560
Singapore	Dollar	0.604477	0.544573	27.9012
Australia	Dollar	0.560041	0.504541	25.8502
Bahrain	Dinar	2.944457	2.652661	135.9091
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.296001	0.266667	13.6627
Brunei	Dollar	0.604575	0.544662	27.9058
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000110	0.000099	0.0051
Thailand	Baht	0.025325	0.022815	1.1689
UAE	Dirham	0.302288	0.272331	13.9529
Korea	Won	0.000860	0.000775	0.0397
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.900900	46.1576
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.460623	23.6000
France	Franc	0.152450	0.137341	7.0367
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453781	0.408811	20.9454
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.065471	3.3544
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.022333	1.1442
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000465	0.0238
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.151521	7.7632
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004494	0.2303
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005415	0.2774
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.022333	1.1442
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.143907	58.6081

Amex Bank going into retail banking in RP

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has authorized American Express Bank to operate in the country following its acquisition of Omni Savings Bank Corp. and its 11 branches.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said Citibank N.A. also sent feelers to the central bank that it would pursue the acquisition of smaller local banks in the coming months to expand its retail banking activities.

"The approval of American Express' entry is in line with the government's thrust to attract foreign investments and make available a wider variety of financial services to the country," said the central bank chief.

The policy-making Monetary Board has also approved the planned merger of Singapore lender DBS Bank Phils. Inc. with BPI Family Bank, the thrift banking arm of the Bank of the Philippine Islands.

Omni Savings is owned by the Manila Banking Corp. which also sold recently its commercial lending unit TA Bank to ABN Amro Savings Bank.

Buenaventura said that with the American Express deal, Omni's capitalization and business would be expanded in the coming months to cover a full range of consumer banking products.

Established in 1919, American Express Bank now operates offshore units in 43 countries. It has a full banking license in 15 countries.

American Express is also the correspondent bank of 1,400 other lenders worldwide.

"The acquisition of Omni by American Express will definitely be beneficial to the Philippine financial system considering its global expertise," said the central bank chief.

Stocks

(From page B1)

nancial district of Makati was largely ignored by investors, as stock market trading proceeded without a hitch, traders said.

"The good news outweighed the bad news," said AB Capital Securities analyst Jose Vistan. "The economic report yesterday showered so much optimism for next year on the market."

"The market did not really focus on that. The market is really stable this time of the year because of anticipated window-dressing" as 2001 draws to a close, said Teresa Lee-Jahrling of Tower Securities Inc.

In her year-end economic report, the President said the country has better prospects next year given economic policies already in place.

Vistan, however, said the intention to inflict damage by those who planted the explosives could not just be ignored.

For now, however, there remains a lot of optimism in the market, which may encourage more bargain hunting and enable the main index to break its 1,150-point resistance during next week's abbreviated trading, he said.

Financial markets will be closed on Dec. 24 and 25 for national holidays.

"The market has been in what you'd call a buying spree since November, with some profit taking along the way," said Vistan. "The market's rally may extend up to the first week of January." *AP, AFP*

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Hog raisers give golf a shot

*Hog raisers play the gentleman's game at Mimosa sponsored by Novartis Philippines Animal Health Sector. (Seated from L-R) **Celestino Co, Johnson Dycaico, Allan Alegre, Jerry Co, Richard So,** and **Bubot Quilat.** Standing behind them are (L-R) **Dr. Jeffrey Dimaranan,** Novartis Sales Manager, **Louis Reñon,** Novartis Head of Finance, **Tony Ignacio, Nap Quintos, Thelmo Tan, Danny Tan, Ely Emas, Dan de Leon, Ben Rara, Alfonso Co, Jerie Macias,** Country Head, Novartis Animal Health, and **Clifton Chui,** President of the Hog Golfers' Club.*

Amidst the greens and the heat at Mimosa Golf and Country Club, hog raisers from Central Luzon all the way to Mindanao took time off to play golf at the NOVARTIS Econor-Quixalud Hog Golfers Golf Cup 2001 held last December 11.

Over 90 participants joined the said tournament, a surprising turnabout compared to last year's attendance. According to Mr. Clifton Chui, President of the Hog Golfers' Club, the assembly was very encouraging. "The tee-off time was set at 7 in the morning, but most of the players were already out in the field at 6. Their enthusiasm is overwhelming."

While guest players strutted outstanding performance, participants from Central Luzon edged out in the tournament due to home court advantage. Winning in the Class C Category is **Nap Quintos** while Class B Category went to **Ben Rara** and Class A Category to **ThelmoTan.** Guest Category Champion was awarded to **Danny Tan** and Over-all Gross Champion to **Allan Alegre** with a gross score of 85.

Other participants who received awards are: **Bubot Quilat**, Most Exercised; **Jerry Co**, Longest Drive; **Celestino Co**, Nearest to the Pin; **Gerald Gonzales**, Guest Category 2nd Runner-Up; **Dan de Leon**, Guest Category 1st Runner-Up; **Mario Abasola**, Class C 2nd Runner-Up; **Tony Ignacio**, Class C 1st Runner-Up; **Alfonso Co**, Class B 2nd Runner-Up; **Johnson Dycaico**, Class B 1st Runner-Up; **Richard So**, Class A 2nd Runner-Up; and **Alex del Rosario**, Class A 1st Runner-Up.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jerie Macias, Country Head of Novartis Philippines Animal Health Sector, expressed his gratitude to the hog golfers who participated in the said tournament. "This is Novartis' way of returning the favor to those who made us the Philippines' leading brand in the animal healthcare."

For the past 6 years, Novartis has been successfully staging golf tournaments and promotional events mainly to foster camaraderie among hog raisers. "The unity of our local hog farmers is an essential factor in bolstering the potential of the livestock industry as an economic asset. As a multinational company producing top-of-the-line healthcare products for farm animals, this is our way of contributing to the agricultural welfare of the country we're serving", concludes Macias.

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Loyola Grand
adj Ateneo ★09185079799

•PROJ 6 442m² 9263307•

RIZAL

Taytay Rzl Comm'l Ind'l 108m² 658-2115/16

Agricultural Land Antipolo Masinag Mrkt L/A 2.8 Hs. 658-2115/16

East Acropolis Taytay Resd'l / Comm'l Lots Call 658-2115/16

Ridgemont Subd Cainta 150 m² &Up OL M-Mla 658-2115/16

Vista Verde Cainta Victoria St., 5 Adj. Lots 658-2115/16

Cuidad Del Sol Taytay Lots 58.50m² & Up 658-2115/16

Taytay 70sqm 09178174547

Valley View Exec. Vill. Cainta 150m² 658-2115/16

PROVINCIAL

Suburbia 2 Pampanga Phase 2 3Adj. Lots 658-2115/16

L-35 Hectare Bulacan P20M V-Lot Call 928-1469

L-1 Hectares Ugong Bulacan V-Lot 928-1469

Montebello
PRE-SELLING
Own a residential lot for a discounted price
1st come 1st serve
Along Maguyam Rd.
Carmona, Cavite 635-8108 Weng

SOUTHPOINT 195m² 645-9931

Tagaytay Lot 5802m² w/View @2T/m² 633-7601/03

OTHER AREAS

Batangas City 09178194131 18ha along hiway P295/m²

LOT FOR SALE
Manila Southwoods Carmona Cavite Blk. 7 Lot 35 Phase 3 575sq.m Contact: Allan at 0917-9526902

SJDM BUL-292sqm CALL: TEL: 8903461 to 69 loc 34

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

MAKATI

2BR Condo 1.9M Dsc.Promo Less 400T 10%DP Bank/Pag-ibig 12Tmo. 8674916 5758367

As low as P9,000++/mo.
Own 2BR condo unit nr. Mkti & Megamall READY 4 OCCUPANCY! Only 10% DP required; Call 888-3333 for more info.

Only 9T Monthly
Own a 2BR 2Storey town house Nr Mkti & Ortigas; Avail of NO DP SCHEME. Call 888-3333 for more info.

MANILA

NEAR SSH'WAY MLA
BNew/4stry/4br/3tb/grge/maid P3.035M up 8903461 loc 34

Own A Condo 13T/Mo.
Nr Ortigas, San Juan, Mdluyong & Mla. AVAIL OF BIG DISCOUNTS NOW! Ready 4 occupancy! Call 716-7039; 716-7044

SAMPALOC Townhse 3M 7139232 • 09198076112

MANDALUYONG

Wack² Royal Mansion @5M Studio w/Pkng 633-7601/03

PASAY

STATE CENTER, ORTIGAS 5 yrs-pay, bes POEA, 242-1521

PASIG

235 FA Rennaisance 3000 3BR 3TB 2 Prkng 634-1212

Alexandra Condo 4Sale /Rent 3br Call 633-7601/03

QUEZON CITY

B-New San Bartolomo Nova QC 2BR & 1TB w/attic, Prkng 0917-8349005 P1.950 - 2.1M (Neg.)

Cubao 56m² 2BR 2TB 3.5M with Prkng 0919-2987229

★ Brand New Town Hses ★ 0919-8707359 • (047) 237-1459

TandangSora 3br+1md 2tb P2.5M DBO 0917-8143792

99.5% COMPLETE
FOR SALE
FURNISHED & UNFURNISHED
ONE BEATRIZ TOWER
1st Class COMM'L-OFFICE RES'L CONDO. X'lent VIEW (360°) of the Metropolis w/ roof top S. POOL & GARDEN and 1st CLASS AMENITIES at a LOWEST PRICE
A. BLVD. nr. ATENEO, UP, PSBA, NCBA, MARYKNOLL, & OTHER PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOLS & Q.C. BUSINESS CENTER
ACCESSIBLE
WHY BUY IF NOT FINISHED
BUY & TRANSFER NOW!
FEW UNITS LEFT
MASTER C RE-DE, INC.
TEL# : 921-4883/922-4464 : 433-7668/433-6842

SAN JUAN

Platinum 1 Annapolis 176 FA 17th Flr. 634-1212

FARM/FISHPEN

P1.2M-2584m² pltry w/rcef hse/H2O/tel 09179473296

Poultry / Piggery / Orchard w/ Fish Ponds / Ornamental Plants 532-3291 • 533-9225

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

MANILA

4BR 3STOREY KAPILIGAN STA MESA 7T/MO 7248742

Studio Semi/Fully Furn. Malate Near DLSU 523-5465

HOUSE

QUEZON CITY

Ldys NR UP DILIMAN 5243126

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

VILLA FELIZA HOMES
Alabang Zapote Rd., Las Piñas City
Initial DP: P 25,000

COASTAL WOODS VILLAGE
Ligas, Bacoor, Cavite
Initial DP: P 25,000

CASIMIRO TOWNHOMES
Habay, Bacoor, Cavite
Initial DP: P 15,000

WESTVILLE HOMES
Ligas, Bacoor, Cavite
Initial DP: P 15,000

FORTE REALTY
2/F Princess Bldg, Esteban St, Legaspi Village, Makati City
810-8019 829-5081
810-7183 872-7603
816-2144 871-8318
776-4604 810-7297
Welcome Brokers & Agents write to
forterealty@skyinet.net

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

ALABANG

ASPEN TOWER ALABANG 1BDR with Balcony Across Festival Mall P45T a Month T8071245

MAKATI

1,2BR 9652 Pililla Mkt 5218333

2BR 9650 Pililla Mkt 5218333

MANILA

2BR 1997 Paco 5218333

3BR 3TB 3sty nr. LSalle 8992148

MANDALUYONG

12,500/mo. w/Tel & Cable 3Bdrms w/T.V. w/Aircon Call Marlyn Tel. 534-6253

PASIG

ASTORIA PLAZA
Ortigas
Full serviced Residences
SALE OR LEASE
1-2br w/Rest., Pool, Gym, Spa, Coffee Shop, Function Rms + Business Ctr
Tel. # 631-3929 DONNA

RENAISSANCE 2000 PASIG 100 SQ.M. 1BDRM F P30T A MO. T8071245

SAN JUAN

LPL Condo G'Hills Unfurn 14T/mo. Call 0916-8261914

FOR LEASE

Flr 148m² Pioneer Hi-land 4 Lease 3Bdrm 928-1469

L-2472m² Marikina V-Lot 4 Lease Call 928-1469

ROOM & BOARD

W/Aircon&CR SAV Mktl 8992148

BEDSPACE

Resdn'l Furnish 2per Room Call 897-3770 NonSmkg Male

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

WANTED TO BUY

RITZ
Furniture/ Used Clothing P.Books/ Shoes/ Sewing Mach T.V.; ref; Stereo; Piano;etc. 3732723;3732724

LOAN & MORTGAGE

2% w/o TAKING CAR 3670169

BUSINESS RENTAL

2sty.w/pkg Tagig C5 8967043

Renaissance 2000 Ortigas Center B-New FF w/Prkng 658-2115/16

MAKATI nr BUENDIA
Ptamo 38/85/62/185m² 1st class 8903461 loc 34 or 19 ofc hrs

Roxas Blvd 4rent 8299073

STORE SPACE 4 RENT W N UBELT 10-15 SQM 7355741

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

KIA

Besta Van P230T (Neg) 871-3535 / 733-2507 / 0917-8472716

ROCHSTA 4 x 4 Jeep Diesel Rush P150T Call 948-8240

MITSUBISHI

Lcr EL94 P155T 09178325705

HEAVY EQUIPMENT/ TRANSPORT

10/20/40KvaGenset,Tractor, Pison,Enginewldr230A,Plate Comptr 3672002 ; 3610215

Executive Aircraft B55 Beechcraft Baron G Pass
Fax 028509018 For Info

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

L3•Cars• 9273453 4538295

Bnew Van 8254058 8261045

Vans Coaster Bus 913-9123

Cars/Vans 4 Rent 8203894

FX VAN 4280012/09178403186

HI ACE VANS •8252988•

HiAce & L300 Tel 9980184

HiAce;L300;BrdalMB;Vans9296250

IT/HIACE 9136710/4333682

L300 T7411356

MB HiAce L3 Urvan 8257135

SELF-DRIVE
New CARS/VANS-ALL BRANDS
ABC 5368822/3039789

Van A1-Con 12Str 433-2161

WANTED TO BUY

BUYING USED CARS 8990215

CAR LOAN

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523/24

2% w/o Taking Car 8966633

2% w/o taking car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 3646928

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3732083

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

HOME APPLIANCE

SONY 14" 2.3 16" 2.7 871-3206

EDPITAF

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
IMPLEMENTING TASK FORCE

Philippines-Australia
Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao Project
(PA - BEAM)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- All positions are contractual, i.e, co-terminous with project life.
- Applicants should be willing to relocate to Davao City (where the project office will be located) at no extra cost to the Project.
- Prospective hirees should be willing to travel to project sites within Regions XI, XII and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).
- Issuance of Contract of Employment is bi-annual renewal of which is subject to the semestral evaluation of job performance.
- Letter of Intent should be forwarded not later than 21 December, 2001 to:

TERESITA D. FELIPE
Executive Director
DepEd - EDPITAF
2/F Dorm D, PSC-NAS Complex
Meralco Avenue
Pasig City

LIST OF VACANCIES

(In compliance with RA 7041)

2 Project Dev't. Officer IV

SG: 22; Bachelor's degree holder • Minimum of five (5) years exposure in implementing foreign-assisted projects • Must have held a senior management position for the last five (5) years • Experience in managing and facilitating training, conferences and seminars • Ability to deal with cross-cultural differences • Proficiency in the application of relevant computer softwares • Familiarity in government accounting rules and procedures • Has good communication skills, written and oral; and Completion of relevant trainings (120 hours)

2 Project Dev't. Officer III

SG18; Bachelor's degree holder • Minimum of five (5) years exposure in implementing foreign-assisted projects • Must have held a junior management position for the last five (5) years • Good working knowledge in government accounting rules and procedures • Ability to deal with cross-cultural differences • Experience in managing and facilitating trainings, conferences and seminars • Proficiency in the application of relevant computer softwares • Has good communication skills, written and oral; Completion of relevant trainings (120 hours)

1 Project Dev't. Officer II

SG: 15; Bachelor's degree holder • Minimum of five (5) years exposure in implementing foreign-assisted projects • Experience in facilitating training, conferences and seminars • Ability to deal with cross-cultural differences • Proficiency in the application of relevant computer softwares • Familiarity in government accounting rules and procedures • Has good communication skills, written and oral; Completion of relevant trainings (120 hours)

1 Project Dev't. Officer I

SSG: 11; Bachelor's degree holder • Ability to deal with cross-cultural differences • Experience in facilitating trainings, conferences and seminars • Proficiency in the application of relevant computer softwares • Has good communication skills, written and oral.

1 Computer Operator III

SG: 12; Completion of at least two years college studies • Preferably with skills proficiency certification on the application and maintenance or relevant computer softwares as issued by the CSC • Ability to deal with cross-cultural differences • Has good communication skills, written and oral.

1 Driver II

SG: 3; At least high school graduate • Minimum of five (5) years driving experience • With professional driver's license • With 20-20 vision • Can undertake minor mechanical repairs of the vehicle.

1 Utility Worker II

SG: 3; At least high school graduate • Must know how to operate office machines.

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PETS

DALMATIAN PUPS w/ Shots n' Papers 09194265555

DOG TRAINER 4528681

PUG USA-Line 7431689

PUGS wrinkled 3725231

Shtzu C-Line 2Mo MF 8215165 09172565163 w/AC-paper

Siberian Husky, Golden Retriever, Boston Terier Pups Jetdog Kennel Call / Text 0917-5348096

STUD GREAT
Dane 0917-5348096

SPORTING GOODS

B.Table B/New w/Accessories • 8014494 • 8020566 •

Imported Billiard 22T, 35T Complete Acc's. 8618714/16 8613123 / 8613125

New Billiard P18.5T P22T P25T Ok C.Card 781-9453

WANTED TO BUY

ANY ROLEX
Buy / Sell / Pawn / Repair
Tel# 804-0484 • 834-2886

B/SELL FUL PD EDUC PLAN 7137284•09177939632

BUYING ROLEX
others, High Price CASH CALL 09178142309/7269687

DEFECT TV/COMPO 7325865

Buy/Pawn Diamonds T834-2886

SALE EDUC'L PLAN 8061574

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

Wanted: Yaya/ Hse Maids Int'l Cook 660-4589

MALE/FEMALE

DECS Marikina City Vacant Pos. 1 HTIII Item No. OSEC-DECSB-HTeach3-30297-1998 S.G. 15 QS BSE PBET/LET passer w/ MA place of assign Marikina High School

PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

NUESTRA-DAMUS PAWNSHOP Makati City Auction Sale on January 9, 2002 all unredeemed pledges during the month of August 01-31, 2001. Nuestra Br. II Plo-9:30am, Nuestra Br. I 10:30am, Damus Pasong Tamo-12:30pm, Nuestra Main JP-1:30pm, Nuestra Br. IX Zapote-3:00pm. Sons of J. Lanuza - Auctioneer

NUESTRA-DAMUS PAWNSHOP Makati City Auction Sale on January 7, 2002. All unredeemed pledges during the month of August 01-31, 2001. Diajade Main-9:30am, Diajade Br. II-10:30am, Nuestra Br. III-11:30am, Diajade Br. I-1:00pm, Nuestra Almanza-2:00pm. Sons of J. Lanuza - Auctioneer

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Attn: Notwrk Mktg. Ldrs Great News! If Ur Not Earning Over 200T/m @ Ur Prsnt Core Bus. Let's Talk Now 807-2359 Resh

BLODGETT OVEN 825-4966

Bo. Kapitolyo 125m² Office or Shop Call 634-1212

SALES ENGINEER
☑ M.E. Graduate
☑ 25-30 years old
☑ Good sales background
COUNTER SALESMAN
for aircon parts
Please call 561-2078; 563-1763
Look for Lai or Gigi

PUBLIC NOTICES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Customer Care Supv. 8T-17T/mo. Call Arlene 522-5919 • 0919-8455165

EARN & TRAVEL 0919-6165084

EARN FR HOME 8531008/09178311728

E-Com Earn $ Wkly BFAD & DTI Approved Call 4 Present Mon 09176678601

GRANTS 4-Projects Plans Health etc (0919)8559630 www.grantriteco.com

I made P1.6M in the last 3 mos., bought a BMW, & had a Sydney Holiday! I need 53 women to train! Ms. Tan 525-0228 or 34

RTW 4 Tiange Bazar3738821

RTW P28up Wsale 727-4934

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given to the public that S2 License No. 15687N98 issued to Dr. Frances M. Tan by the Dangerous Drugs Board has been lost. Drug stores, pharmacies and related persons and entities are advised not to honor any prescription issued pursuant to said license. Finder of said license may conact Dr. Tan at Tel. No. 631-1326 to 28

SKYMART

No. 3 AURORA BLVD., QUEZON CITY
(Opposite SM Centerpoint)
Telephone No. 713-4904 / 713-4730

LOWEST PRICE!!!

Ceramic tiles		
20 cm x 20 cm	P	7.60/pc.
30 cm x 30 cm	P	17.30/pc.
40 cm x 40 cm	P	29.00/pc.
50 cm x 50 cm	P	65.00/pc.
60 cm x 60 cm	P	105.00/pc.
Wall Paper (Imported)	P	280.00/roll
Decorative Light	P	900.00/pc.
Marble Accent (Medallion)		
1M x 1M	P	7,800.00/pc.
1.2M x 1.2M	P	9,800.00/pc.

IMPORTED FURNITURE
WINDOW COVERING

P.V.C. DOOR
PLASTER GLASS
MOULDINGS

A COMBINATION OF CHEAPEST PRICES AND WIDE CHOICES.

HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES LOGISTICS CENTER
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Tel. No. 911-6001 local 5434, 913-1175
AFP Website: http://www.armedforces.mil.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The AFPLC Bids and Awards Committee will conduct a public bidding for the procurement of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

Eligibility and Bid Documents can be obtained or the Secretariat, AFPLC BAC starting on **December 26, 2001** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00.

A pre-bid conference for the item mentioned above will be held on **December 27, 2001** at 10:00 a.m. at the Daza Park Pavilion, AFP Logistics Center, Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Deadline for the submission of the eligibility requirements and the bid envelopes is on **January 18, 2002** at 10:00 a.m. at Daza Park Pavilion, AFP Logistics Center, Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City followed by the Opening of Bids at 2:00 p.m.

The AFP Logistics Center reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid and to award the contract to the lowest calculated responsive bid as determined by the AFPLC Bids and Awards Committee.

(Sgd.) **COLONEL REYNALDO S. RAMIREZ (GSC) PAF**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI -- Dec. 22 & 23, 2001)

The fastest way to a new career.

www.jobmarketonline.com

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
East Avenue, Quezon City 1000 Philippines • Telephone 925-24-01

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY & TO BID

The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) invites sealed written bids, re: a) 1 set Sleep Machine; b) 1 set Neurocom Balance Master System; c) 1 unit Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump; d) 1 unit Pulse Oximeter & e) 1 unit Rigid Bronchoscope.

Only duly accredited bidders/suppliers will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

List of requirements to be submitted:

1. Letter of intent/co. profile
2. SEC registration
3. Bus. License
4. List of clients
5. Financial Statement (last 2 yrs.)
6. ITR (last 2 yrs.)
7. Location Map of Office
8. Brochures of machines

****for add'l requirement, pls inquire at purchasing div. @922-0574 & look for Noemi****

All interested bidders/suppliers must submit their accreditation documents on or before Jan. 8, 2002 at Purchasing Division.

The PHC reserves the right to disqualify any prospective bidder/s if found that they have submitted falsified documents and/or information and the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

(Sgd.) **ROMEO J. SANTOS, M.D.**
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI--Dec. 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 & 24, 2001)

PNOC PETROCHEMICAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY)

11/F, BA Lepanto Building
8747 Paseo de Roxas
1227 Makati City, Philippines
Tel No. (02) 841-0644
Telefax No. (02) 810-8418
Brgy. Batangas Dos
Mariveles, Bataan
Tel No. (047) 244-7441
Telefax No. (047) 244-588 i

INVITATION FOR QUALIFICATION/ ELIGIBILITY AND BIDDING

The PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation (PPDC) invites interested contractors currently accredited with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) in good standing to apply for qualification/eligibility and if subsequently found eligible, to bid for the following project described below

I. Work Order No. : **WSC-01-004**
II. Project Title : **Earthworks and Slope Protection Works of PRII Expansion - II**
III. Scope of Work : Clearing and grubbing to include removal of obstruction, excavation, backfilling, spreading and compaction up to the required elevation, completion of CHB perimeter fence enclosure and drainage manholes.
IV. Minimum Equipment Requirement : **Equipment Description**

Equipment Description	No. of Units
1. Bulldozer, 200-225 HP	3
2. Bulldozer, 300-335 HP	2
3. Payloader, 4 cu. yd. capacity	1
4. Dumptruck, 10-15 cu.m. capacity	12
5. Road Grader, 125 HP	2
6. Vibratory Compactor, Sheeps Fooy, 9-10 Tons	3
7. Vibratory Compactor, Smooth Drum, 9-10 Tons	3
8. Water Truck, 10,000 Liters capacity	1

V. Project Location : Petrochemical Industrial Estate (PIIE) in Limay and Mariveles, Bataan, Philippines
VI. Approved Budget : Pesos Twenty Seven Million One Hundred Twenty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Eight and 10/100 (P27,126,908.10)
VII. Source of Funding : PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation
VIII. Estimated Contract Duration : One Hundred Thirty Five (135) Calendar Days
IX. PCAB License Minimum Requirement
License Qualifications
Classification : General Engineering
Category : AAA
Registration Qualifications
Kinds of Project : Road, Highway Pavement, Railways, Airport Horizontal Structures and Buildings
Size Range : Medium B
X. Similar Contracts : Land Site Development such as General Earthworks and Slope Protection Works
XI. Credit Line/Cash Deposit Certificate Requirement : Pesos Two Million Seven Hundred Twelve Thousand Six Hundred Ninety and 81/100 (P2,712,690.81)
XII. Eligibility Statement Forms : One (1) set each to be filled up and submitted for every project
Cost of Forms : One Hundred Pesos each set (P100.00/set)
Date and Time of Issuance : **January 2-11, 2002** from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Place of Issuance and Submission of Accomplished Eligibility Statements/ Documents : PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation, 11th Floor, B.A. Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, c/o Legal, Contracts and Administration Department
or
PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation, Petrochem Park, Batangas Dos, Mariveles, Bataan, c/o Site Administration Department
Deadline of Submission : On or before **January 18, 2002** at 3:00 p.m.
XIII. Notice of Eligibility/Ineligibility
Date and Time of Issuance : **January 14 - February 8, 2002** from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Place of Issuance : PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation, 11th Floor, B.A. Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, c/o Legal, Contracts and Administration Department
XIV. Pre-bid Conference
Date and Time : **March 7, 2002** at 9:30 a.m.
Venue : PPDC Conference Room, PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation, Petrochem Park, Batangas Dos, Mariveles, Bataan, c/o Site Administration Department
XV. Bid/Tender Documents : Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents
Cost of Documents : One Thousand Pesos each set (P1,000.00/set)
Date and Time of Issuance : **February 11-26, 2002** from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Place of Issuance : PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation, 11th Floor, B.A. Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, c/o Legal, Contracts and Administration Department
or
PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation, Petrochem Park, Batangas Dos, Mariveles, Bataan, c/o Site Administration Department
Deadline of Submission : On or before **April 3, 2002** at 1:30 p.m.
Place of Submission : PNOC - Petrochemical Development Corporation, 11th Floor, B.A. Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, c/o Legal, Contracts and Administration Department
XVI. **BID OPENING IN THE SAME VENUE WILL FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DEADLINE OF SUBMISSION OF BIDS. LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Prospective bidders are required to submit original copy of Credit Line/Cash Deposit Certificate/s and original copies of pertinent documents such as Contractor's PCAB License, audited Financial Statement, etc. for verification/authentication purposes.

All particulars relative to pre-qualification/eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of PD 1594 and its implementing Rules and Regulations, as amended, and other applicable rules and regulations.

PPDC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids thereof, to waive any defect or informality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to PPDC. PPDC further assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders of any expenses or loss that it may incur in the preparation of their bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **VICTORIO MARIO A. DIMAGIBA**
BAC-Chairman

(PDI – Dec. 22, 28, 2001 & Jan. 3, 2002)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Advertisement of Application for Dissolution of Marriage
(F.P. No. 086/34/2001)

Between Shane Terrance Ryan of 624 Wangapeka Road, Little Wanganui, Westport, New Zealand, Applicant and Susanna Hornijas Estovo formerly of 624 Wangapeka Road, Little Wanganui, Westport, New Zealand and now of Manila, Philippines, Respondent.

Take notice that an application for dissolution of the marriage between the Applicant and Respondent ("the application") was made by the Applicant to the Westport District Court, New Zealand on 13 November 2001. The Westport District Court has ordered that the application for dissolution of the marriage be brought to the attention of the Respondent by public notification of such application in a local Filipino newspaper.

The Respondent, Susanna Hornijas Estovo, must file a defence to the application within fifty (50) days from the date of this advertisement. The address for service of such defence is care of Westport District Court, P.O. Box 22, Westport, New Zealand.

If any person knows the whereabouts of the above Respondent could you bring this notice to her attention.

This advertisement is filed by Huei Min Lim, Solicitor for the Respondent whose address for service is KPMG, 89 The Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand.

(PDI - Dec. 22, 2001)

INVITATION TO BID "AS IS WHERE IS"

Damaged Motor Vehicles
1998 Nissan Terrano S/W WDY-594
1997 Honda City 1.3/USS-834
1996 Nissan Sentra 1.3/ULU-266
1996 Toyota Corona 2.0/WAB-544
1999 Honda CRV Wagon/WJZ-133
1994 Suzuki MC 100cc/PE-4200

For particulars, call Philam Ins. Co., Inc./Dick Cariño. Tel. No. 75-43-457

(PDI - Dec. 22 & 23, 2001)

CASCADE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Caraballo and southern cordillera agricultural development programme
is an integrated rural development project of the Department of Agriculture jointly funded by the Government of the Philippines and the European Union.

Invitation for Expressions of Interest

Local Technical Assistant/Specialist In Agricultural Technology Development and Promotion

In the scope of the Agricultural Production Systems Development Component, CASCADE is currently seeking one Local Technical Assistant (LTA) or Specialist in the field of Technology Development and Promotion. CASCADE is currently operating in the uplands of Nueva Vizcaya, Benguet and Nueva Ecija.

Applications are invited from qualified agriculturists with at least ten years experience in planning, development, extension, agricultural research, alliance building and networking with Local Government Units (LGUs). They should be physically fit and capable of working in the field/remote areas.

Expressions of interest together with full CVs and other pertinent documents in support of the application for the above mentioned areas of specialization should be submitted no later than January 15, 2002. Only qualified candidates will receive an acknowledgement and be given the full Terms of Reference (TOR).

All correspondence should be addressed to the following:

THE PROJECT CO-DIRECTORS
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CASCADE is a special project of the Department of Agriculture
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INQUIRER
TRiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

Ninong at Ninang

Q. Where did the Tagalog terms *ninong* and *ninang* come from?

A. Most experts say *ninong* ultimately derives from the '*-drino*' ending of the Spanish *padrino* ('godfather'), and *ninang* from the '*-drina*' of *padrina* ('godmother').

For the Record. Christian baptism was originally administered to adults by immersion in water, and infant baptism has been common only since the 6th century. In some of the Protestant churches, adults are still baptized by immersion in a pool of water to symbolize death and new life.

Past Forward. This day in 1989: The civil war in Romania ended and with it the 24-year-old reign by one of Europe's worst dictators, Nicolae Ceaucescu. Tonight the dictator and his wife, Elena, fled from the roof of their burning palace by helicopter to an unknown destination. Their flight followed the fighting which exploded after Laszlo Tokes, a priest, was threatened with arrest in Timisoara. Around 5,000 were killed in Timisoara alone. State security forces had been fighting the Romanian army, which supported the protesters, leaving hundreds dead. Ceaucescu was later captured and, along with his wife, executed on Christmas Day. Following his execution, the full extent of his repressive rule and personal extravagance became public.

WORD WATCH

Extravagant (ik strav'uh guhnt) : from the present participle of the medieval Latin *extravagari*, a compound formed from the prefix *extra-* ('outside') and *vagari* ('wander' — source of the English vagabond and vagrant); originally used adjectivally with reference to certain uncodified or 'stray' papal decrees, while the present-day meanings 'wildly excessive' and 'spending too lavishly' did not really establish themselves before the early 18th century.

PDI – December 22, 2001

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Cosmos reschedules payment of debt papers

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

COSMOS Bottling Corp., the publicly listed subsidiary of the Concepcion family's RFM Corp., and its creditors have agreed to reschedule the payment of some P1.25 billion worth of long-term commercial papers (LTCPs).

Of the amount, P750 million was due on Dec. 4 and another P500 million payable in April next year.

The company failed to pay the P750 million worth of LTCPs last Dec. 4 apparently because of the delay in the closing of Cosmos' sale to San Miguel Corp. group. It, however, committed to settle the amount on Dec. 28 and pre-pay the P500 million on the same date.

Cosmos is expected to have the money to pay the LTCPs on the 28th as it is scheduled to complete the financial closing of its deal with San Miguel on that date.

On top of the principal amount, Cosmos also committed to pay the interest of 12.75 per year on the LTCPs and a penalty equivalent to 24 percent per year for the delay in the payment of the LTCPs that matured on Dec. 14.

In a statement, Philippine Rating Services Corp., an affiliate of Standard & Poor's, said it recalled its PRS Aa credit rating of Cosmos' LTCPs for lack of official information on their payment.

PhilRatings also said it withdrew its recent PRS Baa rating on RFM's outstanding LTCPs until a review is completed on the implications on RFM of the latest developments.

After receiving a copy of the rating agency's statement, RFM Corp. contacted PhilRatings to clarify the issue. In a subsequent statement on Thursday, PhilRatings said that RFM Corp. vice president for finance and treasury Raymond Azcarate relayed the information that Cosmos' P750 million in LTCPs would be paid on Dec. 28 this year.

CAPEX AT ONLY ₱1B

ABS-CBN to streamline operations next year

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

BROADCASTING giant ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. has mapped out a string of streamlining measures for next year to cope with shrinking advertising revenues brought about by the weakening of the economy.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, ABS-CBN said the measures—including a reduction in manpower initially by 3 percent of its work force—were aimed at limiting its capital expenditures next year to only P1 billion, much lower than this year's P3.5 billion.

It said that some of the broadcasting giant's major talents have already agreed to take pay cuts to support the overall belt-tightening strategy.

ABS-CBN and its subsidiaries have the largest work force in the broadcasting and entertainment industry with over 5,000 regular staff and talents. Based on this number, the planned 3-percent reduction will affect about 150 employees.

"ABS-CBN is gearing up for tough times as advertising minutes are forecast to remain weak in 2002," the company said in the statement.

The company projected that the entire media industry's advertising revenues would slump by as much as 30 percent this year.

"To remain competitive in a changed business environment, ABS-CBN plans to cut operating expenses by 15 percent or as much as P500 million in 2002," it said.

The company estimated that the total advertising minutes fell by about 15 percent in October and November from the same months last year. It said that advertising revenues had been steadily declining since July this year.

"The recent decline was attributed to a general weakness in consumer demand that forced its advertisers, particularly in the packaged goods industry, to cut their media expenses," it noted.

The company earlier planned to raise P3 billion in fresh financing to beef up its infrastructure, specifically to ensure that it will be digitally ready amid the information technology revolution. But the difficult economic environment prevented it from pushing through with new borrowings.

"The company expects that it will depend largely on internally generated cash to support operations next year," the statement said.

PNOC units posted profits in 3rd quarter

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

STATE-OWNED Philippine National Oil Co. yesterday said that all its subsidiaries posted increased earnings in the third quarter.

"We have improved the performance of our more profitable subsidiaries and managed to turn around our losing units," PNOC president Thelmo Cunanan said in a statement.

PNOC Petrochemical Development Corp., PNOC's petrochemical unit, posted the highest profit increase of 302 percent to P19.3 million during the third quarter from P4.8 million in the same period last year.

PPDC is expected to post higher profits once its planned naphtha cracker project in Bataan starts commercial operations.

The construction of the $600-million naphtha cracker project is scheduled to start next year and will be operational by 2006.

PNOC Exploration Corp. earned P6.1 million in the third quarter, almost double of last year's P3.2 million.

PNOC-EC expects to rake in more profits once revenues from the Malampaya gas-to-power project starts coming in next year.

PNOC-EC has a 10-percent stake in the multibillion-dollar project.

Traditional earner PNOC Energy Development Corp.'s profit in the third quarter was flat at P575 million compared with P572 million in 2000.

Also, Cunanan noted that all of PNOC's losing subsidiaries registered a financial turnaround.

PNOC Coal Corp. was most aggressive with P0.8 million in profit during the third quarter compared with a loss of P57 million in the same period last year.

PNOC officials attribute the recovery mainly to PNOC Coal's new management and its manpower reduction program.

PNOC Shipping and Transport Corp. (PSTC) earned P5.4 million against a P35-million loss last year.

Cunanan said in an earlier interview that PSTC's operations would be revitalized through a planned acquisition of new ships.

For its part, Filoil Development and Management Corp. showed third quarter gains of P12 million over last year's P6.2-million loss.

Congress cuts NTC budget by ₱108M

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

THE HOUSE of Representatives has turned down the National Telecommunications Commission's request for a P255.6-million budget for 2002. The commission instead received from lawmakers an allocation that was P107.9 million short of what it sought.

NTC chief Eliseo Rio said with a budget close to the one it had this year, the NTC would not have enough money to buy some much-needed monitoring equipment.

The commission's approved budget for next year was placed at P147.7 million, only P2.5 million higher than its budget this year and P107.9 million shy of what it proposed.

"Our proposal was P255.6 million, but the government is really hard up. There's still our request to be allowed to use the agency's income over and above our target," he said.

Over the past two years, the NTC has posted revenues above its targets.

Last year, for example, the NTC's revenue target was placed at P600 million, but it collected over P821 million.

This year, Rio said, the NTC had projected P732 million in revenues. As of end-October, it has already collected P1.16 billion.

He said in an earlier interview that the NTC was expecting to collect at least another P20 million before the end of the year.

Rio said the commission's target revenue for 2002 stood at P750 million.

With its 2002 budget, he said, the NTC would be unable to buy equipment that it needed to monitor the grade of service being provided by the country's mobile phone companies.

"The problem is the capability of the NTC to measure the quality of service of the industry independent of the cellular operators. Otherwise, we will remain dependent on them and their equipment," he said.

He said in an earlier interview that since it did not have its own monitoring equipment, the NTC had to rely on data it got from mobile phone operators.

This is not an ideal set-up as the wireless phone service providers may soon ask why they are asked to pay regular supervision fees to the NTC when they are the ones doing some of the monitoring for the agency, he said.

Rio said the commission needed around P150 million worth of equipment for Luzon alone.

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China, Japan end trade row

BEIJING—China and Japan signed a last-ditch deal to end a damaging eight-month trade row on Friday, heading off the imminent extension of temporary restrictions, China's foreign trade ministry said.

An agreement was reached at brief talks in Beijing between China's foreign trade minister, Shi Guangsheng, and Japanese counterpart Takeo Hiranuma and Japan's agriculture minister, Tsutomu Takebe.

The two sides reached "identical views" about Japanese import quotas on three Chinese agricultural products, China's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (Moftec) said in a statement.

Tokyo's decision in April to impose the curbs, which it said were aimed at protecting Japanese farmers, prompted retaliatory tariff hikes from China on consumer products worth hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

The temporary Japanese restrictions expired last month, but a deadline for Tokyo to decide on the measures was to end Friday, after which they were due to be re-imposed for four years.

The two sides agreed the restrictions would not be re-imposed and China would also end its retaliatory tariffs, a Moftec spokesperson told Agence France Presse.

"The Japanese government has decided not to apply its restrictions on the three agricultural products. In return, the Chinese government has decided to abolish its restrictions on imports of Japanese cars, air-conditioners and mobile phones," he said.

An official at Japan's embassy in Beijing said the Japanese ministers were working on their own statement, to be released later Friday before they returned to Tokyo.

Friday morning's talks at the Moftec headquarters in central Beijing took less than an hour for a final agreement to be thrashed out.

"The two sides reached identical views on the solution of the two countries' trade dispute concerning three agricultural products, in the spirit of equality, mutual benefit and consultation, and in order to safeguard the overall interest of Sino-Japanese trade relations," Moftec said.

The row began when Japan imposed 200-day import restrictions on three farm imports—spring onions, shiitake mushrooms and rushes used to make traditional Japanese tatami mats—mostly imported from China.

Beijing retaliated in June by imposing 100-percent punitive tariffs on imports of Japanese motor vehicles, air-conditioners and mobile phones.

Japan's temporary "safeguard" measures, permitted under World Trade Organization rules, expired on Nov. 8.

Imports of the three farm products from China totaled 23.7 billion yen ($185 million) in 2000, while Japan's exports of the industrial goods came to 66.6 billion yen, according to Japanese finance ministry data.

AFP

Kawasaki Steel to sell US unit

TOKYO—Major steelmaker Kawasaki Steel Corp. said Friday it would sell its US affiliate to General Electric Corp. of the United States.

Separately, NKK Corp. said it was negotiating over the transfer of its US subsidiary, National Steel Corp., to US Steel, NKK spokesperson Hirohide Yamaoka said.

Both Kawasaki and NKK have announced they will combine their operations next fall in a strategy to strengthen competitiveness in the global market.

Satoru Tone, spokesperson for Kawasaki, the No. 3 Japanese steelmaker, said the company recently agreed to sell to General Electric its US chemicals affiliate K-LNP, which made compound materials consisting of synthetic resins, glass fibers and other items.

Tone refused to provide the value of the deal, but the Nihon Keizai financial newspaper reported Friday it was estimated at about 40 billion yen ($310 million).

AP

Argentina on the edge as leader steps down

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—Outgoing President Fernando de la Rua leaves Argentina in a worse state than when he arrived despite his efforts to put the debt-ridden nation back on track via a series of stringent economic measures.

After taking office on Dec. 10, 1999 with an approval rating of 75 percent, he resigned Thursday, two years later and only halfway through his presidential term, with only 13 percent of the population supporting him.

De la Rua's medicine for the nation, mired in recession for over three years, was to demand sacrifices in the form of austerity measures that intensified once he brought Domingo Cavallo on as his economy minister earlier this year.

But with a debt of $114 billion left from two terms of government by flamboyant president Carlos Menem, things were never going to be easy for De la Rua.

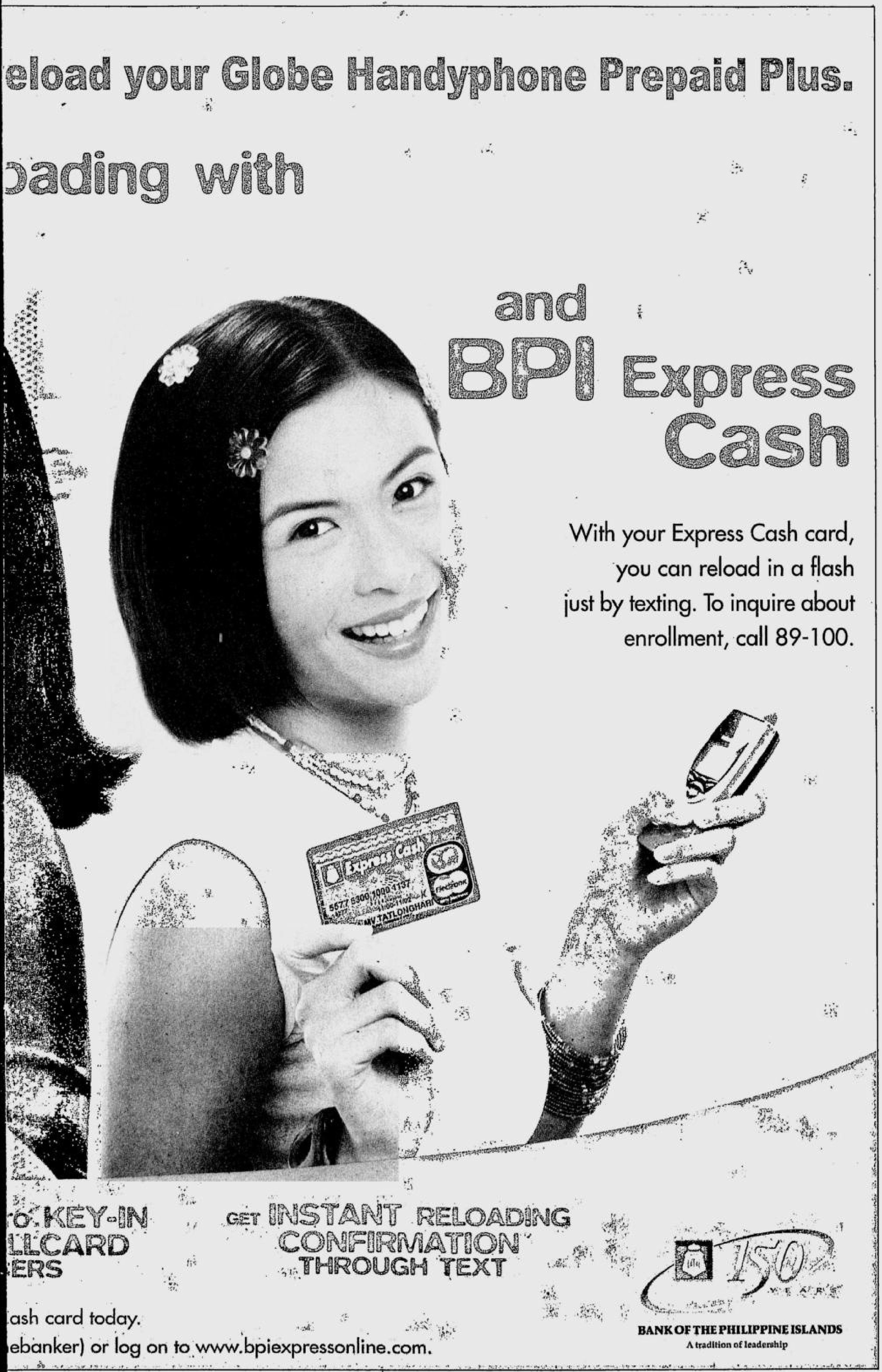
Public debt rose to $132 billion as Cavallo, who resigned late Wednesday, committed Argentina to a "zero-deficit" program—the toughest in a series of economic reform packages that sparked a string of general strikes.

Argentina has now virtually defaulted on its debt, with the International Monetary Fund having so far abstained from providing a vital disbursement to the nation.

The recession, which began in the third quarter of 1998, has intensified.

The country risk premium on Argentine bonds, already high at 676 basis points when De la Rua took over from Menem exactly two years and 10 days ago, hit record levels again Thursday.

AFP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Singapore, Japan reach market deal

SINGAPORE—Singapore and Japan, two of Asia's most advanced financial centers, have agreed to enhance regulatory cooperation between their equity and derivatives markets, the central bank said here Friday.

A statement from the Monetary Authority of Singapore, the city-state's de facto central bank, said the agreement "paves the way for greater mutual assistance between Singapore and Japan in the supervision of the securities and securities derivatives markets."

The agreement is part of the Japan-Singapore Economic Agreement for a New Age Partnership, the formal name of a bilateral free trade accord clinched between the two countries in October.

"With increasing cross-border activities between capital markets, cooperation among regulators has gained greater significance," MAS managing director Koh Yong Guan said in the statement.

He said the arrangement "is important in an environment of increasing globalization, market integration, product innovation and technological advancements."

Japan and Singapore have also opened discussions on mutual trading of equities and derivatives in their respective stock exchanges.

Singapore this week launched a co-trading link with Australia, and Japan was seen as a next step with long-term plans to have similar arrangements in Europe, the Business Times reported.

The co-trading deal with Australia allows investors in either market to directly trade stocks in the other.

On Thursday, the first day of live trading, Singapore investors bought 399,000 Australian shares worth S$693,145 ($380,000), while Australians bought 22,000 Singapore shares worth $37,000.

AFP

Executives plug $45-B AT&T, Comcast deal

NEW YORK—Thirty-eight years after buying a small Mississippi cable television provider, Ralph Roberts sat silently before media cameras and let his son do the talking about a deal that, if completed, would turn the family company into the top industry player.

But after Brian Roberts finished answering questions from reporters, it was his father's turn to speak up about the capstone of his career—buying AT&T's cable business, the country's largest, for $45 billion.

"This is a remarkable story of American business," Ralph Roberts said in a scratchy voice. "And I don't think it could happen in any other country."

It was almost unbelievable, he said, that he and his son were able to turn Comcast into the country's third largest cable operator—and put the company in a position where AT&T would even consider doing business with its smaller rival.

The younger Roberts and AT&T chair and chief executive C. Michael Armstrong touted the merger as a way to provide television, Internet and telephone service to a fifth of America's households at competitive prices.

"We can give them greater choice at very competitive prices," Armstrong said in an interview. "This just couldn't be better for the consumer."

AP

Microsoft sues to block use of 'Lindows'

SEATTLE—Software giant Microsoft Corp. has sued computer operating system maker Lindows.com, claiming Lindows.com's name is too close to that of its own dominant Windows operating system.

In a lawsuit filed Thursday in US District Court, Microsoft alleges that the name Lindows could confuse the public and infringe on the trademark of its dominant Windows system, which runs on about 90 percent of personal computers.

The Redmond, Washington-based company is asking the court to force Lindows to change its name but does not ask that anything in the product be changed, Microsoft spokesperson Jon Murchinson said.

Michael Robertson, Lindows.com's founder and chief executive, said the company had no intention of changing its name. He said he doubted people would confuse a 20-employee upstart with a major software empire.

"If they're alleging that people are confusing Microsoft Corp. with Lindows.com, they're crazy," said Robertson, the former chief executive of digital music pioneer MP3.com.

AP

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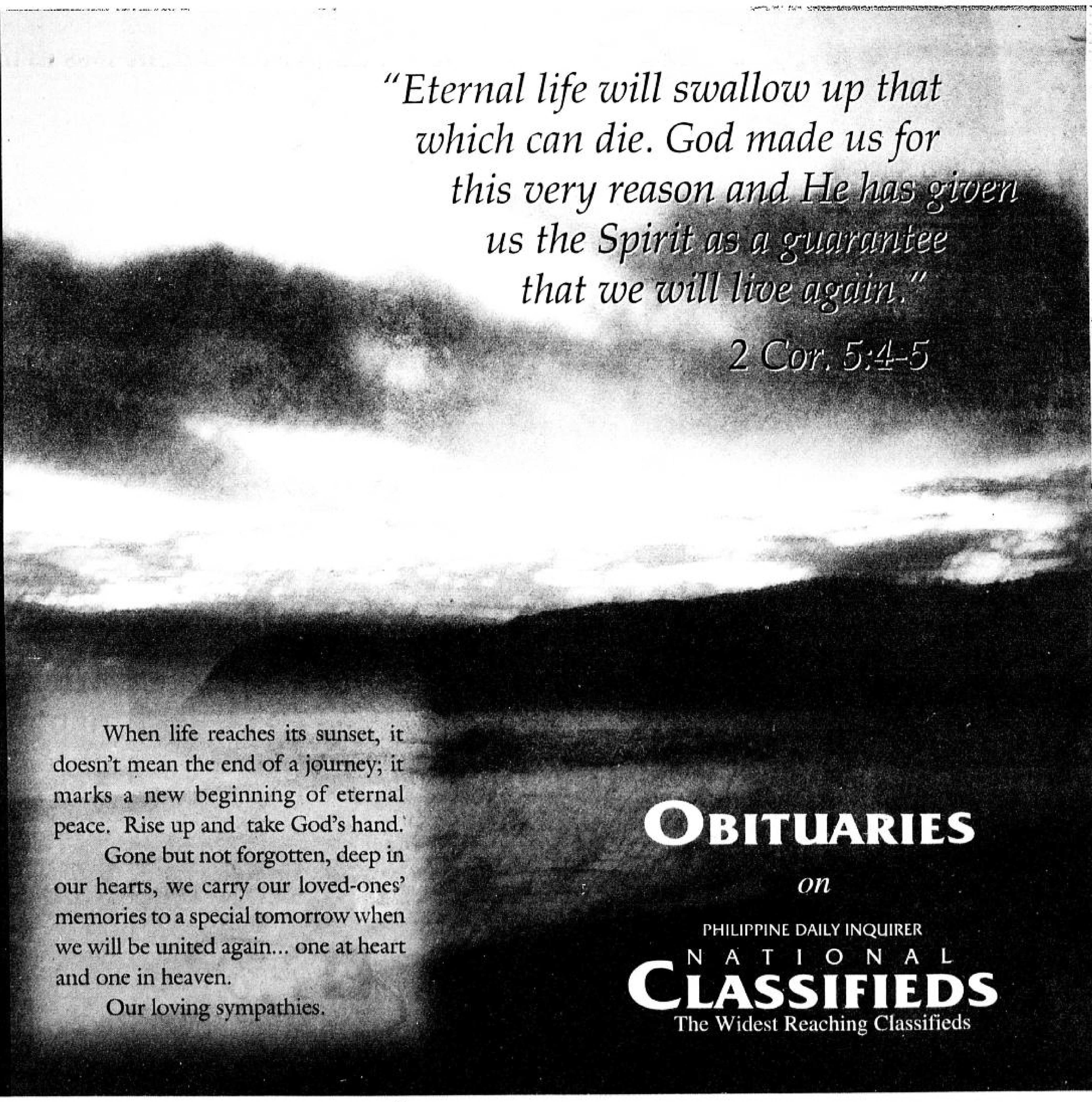

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Cor. 5:4-5

When life reaches its sunset, it doesn't mean the end of a journey; it marks a new beginning of eternal peace. Rise up and take God's hand.

Gone but not forgotten, deep in our hearts, we carry our loved-ones' memories to a special tomorrow when we will be united again... one at heart and one in heaven.

Our loving sympathies.

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Grand Christmas treat for Pokemon fans today at SM Megamall

A SUPER-SPECIAL Christmas treat awaits thousands of Pokemon Trading Card Game (TCG) players and fans when the much-awaited grand national finals of the Pokemon Trading Card Game Master Trainers Showdown unfolds today at the Megatrade Hall 2, Building B of SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

An impressive crop of Pokemon fanatics bannered by 44 top qualifiers from various chapters of the Pokemon League from as far as Lipa City in Luzon and Cagayan de Oro City in Mindanao will see action in the tournament, which will use the 128-man, 7-round Swiss tourney format.

Aside from regular fans and players, a banner crowd of Christmas merrymakers and holiday shoppers is expected to troop to the venue and watch the country's best players fight it out in the ultimate battle of wits and strategies to determine the No. 1 master trainer of them all.

The 44 master trainers earned the right to compete in the national finals after hurdling the series of monthly elimination contests conducted since July in various Pokemon TCG tournament centers in Metro Manila and key areas in the provinces.

Cards to be used in the championship are three of each type of base set to Neo Revelation Pokemon, Southern Island collection, promo cards, base set to Neo Revelation trainer cards, special energy cards, double colorless energy cards and base to Neo Revelation basic energy cards (unlimited).

Absolutely no Japanese cards, counterfeit cards and proxy cards will be allowed.

An array of big surprises, giveaways and Christmas gifts is at stake in the national finals, topped by an Apple I-Mac computer for the champion, plus a Canon printer, Canon scanner and a complete set of Neo Revelation First Edition cards and other attractive prizes.

Other highlights of the one-day championship include the "King of the Hill" contest and the Gym tournaments.

"King of the Hill", which is open to junior players only (12 years and below), is an informal contest in which the trainers fight each other to win three consecutive victories and qualify for a raffle that will entitle the winning trainers to join a mini-tournament.

The Gym tournaments, which will feature the metal/darkness gym, baby gym and open gym cards, involve winning in three gym contests that will qualify the victors for a raffle for the final eight players. It is open to players of any age.

As in the past, those who wish to engage in a non-competitive activity can join the various basic league activities, such as card trading, playing games, teaching new players and earning more points.

Expected to be another big crowd-drawer among the Christmas merrymakers is the special appearance of the lovable Pikachu, one of the most popular Pokemon characters, who will meet and greet fans during the affair.

Tourney registration fee is P350. All payments are non-refundable. There will be an entrance fee of P50 which will automatically entitle the patron to two free games (P10 per game) and lots of freebies through sampling by various sponsors.

The Pokemon TCG Master Trainers Showdown national finals brings to a close a successful Pokemon season highlighted by a marked growth in popularity among kids and adults for the trading card game that combines competitive card game action and good, wholesome family entertainment.

Since its launch here more than a year ago, more than 2,000 regular members have joined the Pokemon bandwagon and actively participated in the activities of the organization. Numerous establishments in Metro Manila and the provinces have also been designated as league centers that serve as venues of various events and activities of the group.

The Pokemon TCG Master Trainers Showdown national finals is presented by Nestle Chocolait and co-presented by Apple Phils. in cooperation with Dumex Precision Nutrition, Canon Phils., Quickweb, Junior Inquirer and Kolin.

It has been organized by Ban Kee Trading, exclusive distributor of Pokemon TCG and Pokemon toys by Tomy.

BRITISH SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS AND PEACE

The British Embassy recently launched the 'Peace Weavers, A Cross-Cultural Dialogue' as part of its program for business and peace in Mindanao. It promotes peaceful methods of resolving conflict and has built tolerance and diversity under the shared identity of a 'Mindanaoan'. Shown (second from right) Melinda Prieto, director, education and training of initiatives for international dialogue presenting a token to HM Ambassador Alan Collins (middle). Two representatives from the Muslim and lumad communities and Daniel Painter (extreme left), third secretary was there to witness the handover.

EURORIENT EYES RP SMES

World-renowned businessman Ron Nechemia (right) and Eurorient Philippines representative Mercedes Busuego (left) met recently to discuss capitalization opportunities for small and medium enterprises. Eurorient and its affiliates have assisted countries such as China by lending capital to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) at low interest rates and payable within 10 years. Eurorient has lent up to $150 billion dollars to SMEs in China. Nechemia's four-year study on the economic situation of the Philippines has encouraged him to invest in the Philippines. Shown with Nechemia and Busuego is lawyer Miguel Varela.

NIIT
RIZAL UNIVERSITY

NIIT SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH JOSE RIZAL UNIVERSITY

The National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT), an affiliate of ePLDT, recently signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Jose Rizal University (JRU) to give its students an option to pursue a degree in the university. Shown during the signing ceremonies are (from left), Mindstream Inc. chair and Pacific Northstar Inc. president Francisco A. Dizon, NIIT vice president Malou C. Jopillo, NIIT president Bartolome Silayan, JRU president lawyer Jose D. Salazar, JRU EVP and vice president for academic affairs Dr. Vincent K. Fabella and Mindstream Inc. director Augusto S. Gonzales. Under the MOU, a student who completes NIIT's two-year professional diploma program in e-technologies can take JRU's bachelor of commerce degree program for another two years and earn a university degree. JRU, one of the oldest institutions of business education in the Philippines, is among the few level III-accredited universities in the Philippines recognized by the government. It is well-known for its value education, and has produced outstanding graduates such as former President Ramon Magsaysay, Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco, former Education Secretary Armand Fabella, MMDA Chair Benjamin Abalos and former Manila Mayor Mel Lopez.

New data proves weight-loss drug claims

IN THE preliminary results of the new research conducted by the North American Association for the Study of Obesity (Naaso), weight-loss medication Xenical (Orlistat) helps overweight and obese people lose weight rapidly and is associated with rapid improvements in cardiovascular risk factors.

Of the 430 people who have participated in the study, 83 percent achieved clinically meaningful weight loss of about 5 percent of their body in the first 12 weeks of treatment. The greatest weight loss (4.1 kg) was seen in the first four weeks of treatment. Body mass index was reduced by 2.9 kg/sqm. Waist circumference was reduced by 6.3 cm. on average. The weight loss in the first month of treatment was also associated with rapid improvements in cardiovascular risk factors and reductions in mean diastolic and systolic blood pressure. Reduction of waist circumference decreases insulin resistance, and improves blood sugar, cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

A second presentation of Naaso further confirms that Xenical is successful in maintaining weight loss over a two-year period. Xenical is a weight-loss drug that works locally in the gut to prevent dietary fat absorption by around 30 percent. It is well-tolerated and unlike appetite supressants, it does not act on the brain.

Cheong-Kwan-Jang Korean Red Ginseng now open for franchise

INSAM Corp., the exclusive distributor of Cheong-Kwan-Jang Korean Red Ginseng in the Philippines, announced that its franchise expansion program is now in full swing. Consistently among the top countries in sales production in Southeast Asia, Insam is now focused on increasing its sales centers to 100 by next year.

Jing Embate, Insam's sales and operation manager, said the move is part of its initiative to fulfill the company's mission–to bring KRG in every home. This can only be met with enough sales outlets nationwide which would help educate people about the tremendous health benefits of Korean Red Ginseng, tagged as the ''Supreme Elixir of Life''.

Embate further stressed that its existing Metro Manila and provincial branches have brought in huge capital returns because of the positive effects of the products on the health of its users.

Guaranteed to be a source of health and wealth, Insam invites business and health enthusiasts to join them in its crusade in spreading the good news of health. For inquiries, interested parties can call 526-1860 / 526-0184 or they may send letters of intent to Insam Corp., 4th floor Kassel Condominium, 2625 Taft Avenue, near corner Vito Cruz, Manila or e-mail Insam@I-next.net.

CFBCI BACKS TAX DRIVE

Top officials of the Chinese Filipino Business Club Inc. (CFBCI) recently paid a courtesy call on Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho to formally pledge the group's solid support to the Bureau of Internal Revenue's (BIR) Voluntary Assessment Program. CFBCI maintains that the Voluntary Assessment Program will serve the BIR well in its effort to raise much-needed revenues for the Arroyo government. Shown is Secretary Camacho exchanging views with CFBCI president Dante Y. Go, with (from left) Co Chi Juan, Rufino Kopio, Siy Yap Chua, Aw Peng Lam, Roman Yap, Engco Lim and Henry Yao.

Teen Lit Camp

ADARNA House and Filipinas Heritage Library invites all teens (aged 13 to 16) to submit their works in fiction, essay or poetry, and vie for a slot in the 2nd Annual Teen Lit Camp. Teen Lit Camp is a week-long out-of-town camp for teen writers. The Camp shall feature talks by established writers, discussions, and other activities related to writing. All submissions should be typewritten and submitted to Adarna House, 73-A Scout Limbaga Street, Quezon City. Deadline for all submissions is Jan. 25, 2002. For more inquiries, call Jen at 372-3548 or 49 or e-mail adarnahouse@adarna.com.ph.

'Messiah': the immortal concert

HANDEL'S ''The Messiah'' will be presented in a free Christmas concert today, Dec. 22, at 6:30 p.m. at the Central United Methodist Church Sanctuary, 694 T.M. Kalaw, Ermita, Manila. The musical performance will feature Gamaliel Viray as conductor, soloists professor Elmo Makil (baritone), Rachelle Gerodias (soprano), Leah Tapia (mezzo soprano) and engineer Benjie Bernardo (tenor), together with the CUMC Chancel Choirs. For inquiries, call 525-7590.

EARTH+STYLE SUPPORTS PASKUHAN SA IMUS 2001

In generous support of the 'Paskuhan sa Imus 2001', Earth+Style Corp., the lead provider of property-based lifestyle values, recently donated P100,000 to the Imus Municipal Tourism Council, through the mayor of Imus, Cavite, Homer Saquilayan. The 'Paskuhan sa Imus' is an annual festive celebration of Imus conceptualized and founded in 1992 by then mayor (now Cavite Governor) Ireneo 'Ayong' S. Maliksi. The celebration, held every December, promotes tourism in Imus. All affairs in connection with this celebration are spearheaded and coordinated by the Imus Municipal Tourism Council. Shown accepting the donation from lawyer Maria Chantal Maliglig, head of Earth+Style's legal management department are Imus Mayor Saquilayan (second from right), Cpuncilor Allan Dexter Jamir, committee chair of the subdivision and housing development, Councilor Carlito Aguinaldo and Apolinar Paulme, chief of the Imus Civil Security Council.

Giving premature babies the right to sight

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

MANY premature infants cannot, and will never, see those bright twinkling lights hanging on Christmas trees. Nor can they see those dazzling Christmas lanterns displayed outside homes and in the streets. In this colorful world, these babies live in darkness.

Sean Lacson is a 10-month-old baby. He is different from other babies not only because he was born premature but also because he was diagnosed to have retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) a few months after he was born. The condition caused him to be blind.

ROP is caused by an underdeveloped retinal vasculature among those born premature. The eye is like a ping pong ball with a film inside. The baby does not receive any visual stimulus.

ROP occurs mostly among those born before the seventh month or those who weigh less than 1.5 kilos or to premature babies who had oxygen-assisted breathing for a period of time.

The prevention and cure of ROP necessitates one crucial procedure: early examination of high-risk infants to prevent the condition from progressing.

But the Parents Advocate for Visually Impaired Children (Pavic) noted that many pediatricians and neonatologists overlook the importance of such a screening.

In the case of Sean Lacson, his family learned about the boy's condition only after three or four months.

SEAN Lacson, although born premature, looks like a normal baby with a bright future waiting of him.

"This was when we started to notice that our child was not (visually) responding and had a white spot (leukocoria) already evident in the eye," lamented Sean's grandmother, Alma Lacson.

The boy already had ROP stage 5 at which point no operation could restore an infant's normal vision.

ROP stages 1 to 3 are treatable, while stages 4 and 5 lead to irreversible blindness.

Pavic said many hospitals in the country do not screen high-risk infants for ROP.

"Early examination is of utmost importance to avoid ROP from progressing. Many babies could have been spared from going blind if this simple routine was followed," said Lacson.

Dr. Sherman O. Valero, a retinologist at the Makati Medical Center who performs ROP surgery, said during an INQUIRER interview four months ago that ROP was becoming prevalent in the country because the survival rate of premature babies was getting higher.

DOH assistant secretary Dr. Eric Domingo, an ophthalmologist, said a pediatrician's primary concern with a premature baby is stabilizing his condition first.

And he said that examining an infant, particularly one less than 1.5 kilos, for ROP was risky. He said a doctor has to put a few drops of medicine and prod the infant's eyes several times. The infant becomes stressed. The heart rate and the blood pressure start to rise, making it risky for the premature infant.

Domingo said it takes an hour to examine an infant and the doctor would need special instruments.

A FEW months later, baby Sean was diagnosed with ROP after a white spot became evident in his eyes. By then it was too late to save his sight.

"The mere act of pushing the eyes during examination could irritate an infant and cause the removal of the oxygen and other tubes attached to him. That's why many doctors wait for the infant to become stable. Special examination for these children is a very strenuous task," said Domingo.

But once the child becomes stable, treatment should be done right away because ROP progresses quickly, he said.

Ophthalmologists need referrals first before they can see a baby for ROP, Domingo said.

"We don't go around hospitals asking if there are premature babies. Examining people that are not our patients is against the law," he said.

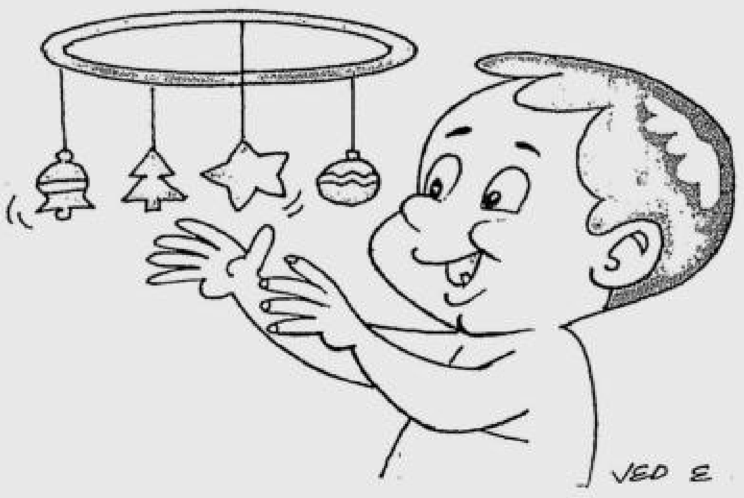
The problem is aggravated when a premature infant is not born in a hospital. These infants have no access to centers capable of handling premature babies.

When asked who should be held accountable for late ROP stage among infants, Domingo answered that it was "very difficult to pinpoint."

"I'm trying to educate everybody, including pediatricians and parents. I am appealing to parents to insist that examination be done on your infants," he said.

The doctor plans to organize a group of parent-advocates, get them together with ophthalmologists, pediatricians and retinologists and the media to put up an educational campaign.

No Santa can bring back the gift of sight to Sean Lacson anymore. But his grandmother Alma is fighting for other babies like him who also have ROP but who might have a chance to have their sights saved through proper and immediate medical intervention.



Delivering drugs: beyond pill popping

BY MASSIE K. SANTOS
Contributor

TIRED of constantly having to remember when to take your cough medicine? Feeling lightheaded from taking too many pills for the headache that wouldn't go away because the tablets were digested in the stomach and they never reached the bloodstream? Unhappy at the thought of self-administering that next injection, or worse, having to spend time and money going to a doctor or nurse so they can do it?

Ten years from now, such concerns may exist solely in period pieces. Scientists are developing alternative methods of drug delivery to guarantee that a drug's dosage will reach the affected areas of the body continuously so no one will have to worry about remembering when to take their medicine, fret over how to take it, or wonder if it's working.

Skin patch

One of the more visible alternative methods of drug delivery currently in use is the skin patch. Applied to the body, the patch bypasses the oral pathway altogether, and thus makes sure that more of the drug enters the bloodstream at a continuous rate.

Unfortunately, the skin patch can only deliver very small molecules through the skin. It's been used for delivering nitroglycerin for heart conditions, scopolamine for motion sickness, and as a way to help smokers quit craving for cigarettes.

Last month, a specially formulated skin patch also became an alternative to birth control pills for women. Instead of having to remember to take a pill every day, a woman needs only to apply a patch once a week (if it falls off it can be reapplied up to four times, even in the shower), and refrain from wearing one during the week when she gets her period.

Hopefully she remembers to put on a new patch after that though.

Nasal sprays

Nasal sprays work on the same principle like the skin patch in bypassing the mouth, and are also currently in the market for antiallergy medications.

The mucous membrane in the nose is more permeable than the skin and the drug can pass through faster. Like pills and injections however, the drug isn't delivered at a continuous rate so the drug levels in the bloodstream vary, as does its efficacy.

Scientists have been working on a way for diabetics to take their insulin through nasal sprays rather than through injections, and test results are encouraging so far.

Pill pump

Other methods of drug delivery are refinements on the pill. Pills today often have several coats surrounding the drug so that the medicine can be released over time and not get digested immediately upon ingestion.

One version, called a "pill pump," has the powder form of the drug surrounded by a membrane that absorbs water. When taken orally, water slowly seeps into the coating and eventually dissolves the powder, which escapes through a small hole in the pill. Some scientists are working on a way to turn liposomes into a natural coating for the powdered drug and thus make a targeted time-release pill.

Another version takes the coated drug idea and places it on a wafer that can be implanted into the target area. This idea has been seen at work in contraceptives such as Norplant and works best when the drug is required to be constantly and continuously administered.

Someday, scientists hope, a wafer saturated in anticancer drugs can be implanted into a brain tumor so that the brain fluids degrade the coating and slowly release the compounds, acting only on cancer cells and don't harm the surrounding normal cells.

Implantable drug chips

Also in development is an implantable drug-saturated chip that can be activated by the patient himself with the help of magnetic fields, ultrasonic waves, or even light.

Anyone who has read Michael Crichton's "The Terminal Man" may remember that the man who had electrodes implanted in him to control his behavior eventually found a way to activate those electrodes himself, and thus control his own moods.

By the same token, it is not difficult to predict that some people may take the notion of self-regulating their medications, especially those that are self-activating, to new heights and thus become addicted.

This is not to say that when these alternative methods of drug delivery become widely available doctors will choose who among their patients will take the time-release brands and those who will take the self-activated types based on their personalities. Rather, doctors will be able to select the method of drug delivery by which each individual patient can receive the right dose of medication at the right time. Hopefully when that day comes, side effects will also be a thing of the past.

* * *

(The writer can be contacted at massie@massie.com.)

The case of the stiff fingers; tempest at the Lung Center

BY RAFAEL R. CASTILLO, MD

MEDICAL FILES

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

DR. Mayvelyn de Dios Gose, a highly respected neurologist in the country and a professor at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, tried to assure the obviously depressed Gabriel about his medical condition. She told him that his disease was also the bane of other prominent personalities like Pope John Paul II, Michael J. Fox, Janet Reno and Muhammad Ali. Gabriel was simply inconsolable. He couldn't help but think about his career, which was his life; and his future suddenly seemed to be a big blur.

Gabriel is a 57-year-old architect with a flourishing practice in the Bicol region. He consulted Dr. Gose because of increasing difficulty in preparing his designs. He complained of stiffness and unsteadiness of his fingers so much so that the lines in his drafts were disrupted with an unintended peculiar serration. Sometimes, his sketches would even be jagged. He used to sign his name with pride on every plate that he prepared, but soon he started to be ashamed of his architectural designs. He noted that he would sign his name with big letters, which looked a lot different from his usual signature. The ease and facility with which he used to make his building perspectives were no longer there. The fine sketches have been replaced by squiggles with its irregular twists and curves.

Gabriel would also have mild tremors on his right hand while at rest. He noted though that when he stretched out his hand to reach for an object or worked his fingers on the beads of his rosary while praying it, the tremors would disappear. He was so embarrassed by his resting tremors that most of the time he would put his hand in his pants pocket. At about this time, he also noted mild pain over his lower extremities associated with stiffness. He attributed this to aging but his wife who is a doctor told him that his symptoms could not be explained by arthritis alone. He was given pain relievers which only offered relief of the pain but not of the tremors and other symptoms.

Examination

This went on for one-and-a-half years before his wife brought him to Dr. Gose, who is a past president of the Philippine Neurological Association and the current president of the Movement Disorder Society of the Philippines. On examination, the compassionate specialist saw a man who looked younger than his age because of his wrinkle-free face, who walked with a slight shuffling gait, with stooped shoulders and whose right hand showed an involuntary tremulous motion.

Dr. Gose also noted a paucity and slowness of movement. Gabriel spoke in a soft, slow, monotonous voice. He barely blinked so that he looked like he was staring. When asked to describe his tremors he mentioned that they would occur at rest but these would be completely gone when he moved his hands. The tremors were also absent during sleep, his wife noted. An examination of his extremities showed cogwheel rigidity preventing smooth execution of movements as if "the joints lacked oil."

After a thorough assessment, Dr. Gose told Gabriel that he had Parkinson Disease or PD. PD is a relatively common disabling disorder of the nervous system afflicting many at the prime of their lives. It is characterized by four principal symptoms: rigidity of the limbs or stiffness of the joints simulating arthritis, tremor of the limbs which is more prominent in the hands, bradykinesia of the limbs and body, and postural instability. Bradykinesia, the most prominent and disabling symptom of PD, is the difficulty in initiating movement characterized by slowness or paucity of movement.

Great men are not spared by PD. Can one ever forget the shaking of Muhammad Ali's hands in front of millions of people while he was lighting the Olympic torch in Atlanta in 1996? It was difficult to reconcile this scene with one of the greatest boxers of all times who danced around his foes like a butterfly and stung like a bee.

Deficiency

Dr. Gose explained that the basic problem in PD is the lack of dopamine, a hormone or nerve-transmitter produced by the body that serves as the "oil" so that movements can be executed smoothly. Dopamine is secreted by the cells in the brain called substancia nigra but in PD, there are not enough cells to secrete the hormone, thus the deficiency.

Treatment of Parkinson's Disease is based on the following:

1. Replacement of dopamine with levodopa (Sinemet or Madopar), which is a precursor of dopamine, or with monoamine oxidase inhibitors, which minimizes metabolism of dopamine;
2. Stimulation of the markedly diminished substancia nigra to produce more dopamine by dopamine agonists like Parlodel and Celance;
3. Stimulation of the central and peripheral dopamine receptors by piribidil (Trivastal retard).

Although levodopa is the drug that will replace or augment the lack of dopamine, which is the basic problem in PD, it is not recommended to give it at the very start of the therapy. Levodopa can produce marked improvement of signs and symptoms, however, it has been observed that the patients who are started early will also develop its bothersome side effects like involuntary movements called dyskinesias and the so-called on-off phenomenon.

Dyskinesias could take the form of pelvic thrusts, chewing movements or other involuntary movements. On-off phenomenon is characterized by abrupt but transient fluctuations in the severity of the parkinsonism, usually occurring frequently during the day without any relationship to the last dose of levodopa. This could take the form of suddenly "freezing" while walking down the street or climbing the jeep as if the "switch was suddenly turned off." The sudden "unfreezing" or resumption of normal movement can make one lose balance and cause falls and other accidents.

Many experts on PD are in agreement that it is best to defer use of levodopa at the start and to try other drugs first that can ameliorate signs and symptoms in the early stage of the disease. Dr. Gose however recommends that if the symptoms are significant and the ADL (activities of daily living) is affected, one should not hesitate to use levodopa but it should always be started with a small dose, gradually increasing it until an optimum dose is reached based on the patient's clinical response. Combination therapy as, a strategy for management is the better option so that one can take advantage of the additive or synergistic benefits of the different drugs while minimizing their unwanted side effects.

Another form of treatment being used is the surgical transplantation of substancia nigra cells into patients with PD. The theoretical rationale is that the transplanted tissue can produce and release dopamine. Results so far have been unsuccessful and this approach is highly controversial.

Treatment

Gabriel was initially placed on Trivastal 1/2 tablet once a day for two weeks. This was gradually increased to one tablet thrice a day. A small dose of a dopamine agonist was also given. After a few months of treatment, Gabriel's rigidity started to improve so much so that he started to move around his house freely and unassisted. He felt "well-oiled" again because his movements could now be executed smoothly. He was maintained on his medications and after 12 months, he was also started on low-dose levodopa. His symptoms further improved so that he started signing his name again with pride on his architectural designs. He resumed his social activities and many friends noted that he has regained his confidence.

Gabriel now feels he has his faculties back in harness. His artistic skills may not be exactly like it used to, but his assistant and draftsmen can take care of that. What is important is that his creativity is preserved which translates into some of the finest architectural gems in the Bicol region.

* * *

The Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) has virtually risen from the ashes since it was gutted on May 16,1998. Much credit has to be given to its officers headed by its director, Dr. Fernando Melendres, who literally had to move mountains to get the hospital rebuilt at a time when many were convinced that just making it a part of another medical center was a better option.

During all these years, the LCP has maintained its services to all who needed good medical attention for their lung ailments. Operating in makeshift surroundings with meager resources, it has attended to many indigent pulmonary patients who required thorough medical care or surgical intervention. Dr. Melendres, who is one of the finest thoracovascular (chest) surgeons in the country, has personally attended to a lot of these patients for free.

Polarization

I can therefore find no consonant rhyme or reason in the current tempest brewing at the Lung Center. Just when we thought that the LCP had shown it could rise from the ashes like the legendary phoenix, the medical-nursing staff and rank-and-file are split right in the middle because of the resurrection of old charges against Dr. Melendres. The rehashing of these old charges is counterproductive and has led to the polarization of the doctors and employees. Such tempest is likely to decimate whatever gains the LCP has attained in the last three-and-a-half years.

Dr. Melendres is a stickler for discipline and being such does not rest well on many employees. He has apparently earned the ire of many full-time consultants in the hospital by requiring them to report promptly and work in the hospital for the number of hours required for full-time employees--not a single minute less. Private practice is strictly prohibited during office hours. This has made him unpopular among the doctors who regard him as "dictatorial and oppressive."

To insinuate that Dr. Melendres is not competent to be LCP director doesn't make any sense. He was class salutatorian at the UP College of Medicine (1974) and topped the diplomate exams for general surgery in 1981. He had also passed both the Civil Service and Career Executive Service Boards.

I find it very difficult to believe the charges of graft and corruption against Dr. Melendres, especially if you're talking of hundreds of millions of pesos. This is something you cannot hide, much like a rubber balloon which will force itself into the surface no matter how much you try to push it under the water. He lives a spartan life in a modest home in Antipolo. I still see him using either his old Lancer or an equally old Toyota, which is probably the service car provided by the LCP.

Room for improvement

Admittedly, Dr. Melendres can learn and use a lesson or two in tact and diplomacy, or perhaps, public relations. His critics may have some point about his being "dictatorial and oppressive" and he can perhaps identify some room for improvement in his leadership and management style. His resurrected "marital and other personal life issues" or his being distantly related to a former president's mistress, which to me are all nonissues, can reflect negatively on his record. But when you sum up his performance, accomplishments and vision for the LCP, I believe Dr. Melendres still yields a highly positive bottom line.

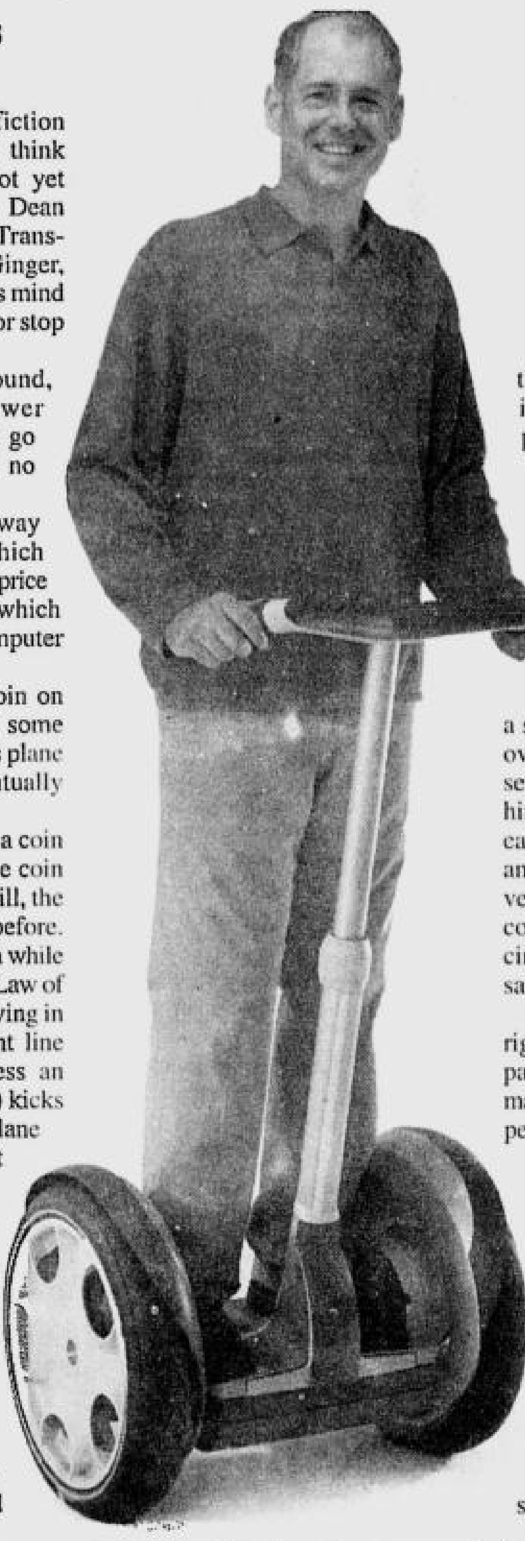
I hope and trust that his critics, many of whom are my good friends and who I'm sure have LCP's interest at heart, can set aside all personal differences and rally behind Dr. Melendres in making the LCP a truly world-class medical center. This will certainly make the most meaningful expression of the Christmas spirit at the LCP.

* * *

(For comments or inquiries, e-mail raffymd@i-manila.com.)

Segway human transporter: a balancing act

BY MASSIE K. SANTOS
Contributor



Unless cheaper versions flood the market, the Segway human transporter will remain a toy for the extremely wealthy

DESPITE all the science fiction stories about machines that think for themselves, man has not yet succeeded in building one. Dean Kamen's Segway Human Transporter, also known as IT or Ginger, doesn't really "read" its rider's mind to move forward, backward, or stop despite its inventor's claims.

So how does the 80-pound, battery-powered lawnmower lookalike decide to stop and go when it has no brakes and no throttle?

The answer lies in Segway HT's computer system (which accounts for most of its $3,000 price tag) and in the human head (which serves as the model for all computer systems).

Have you ever stood a coin on its edge and let it spin? At some point, the coin tilts, shifting its plane of rotation, causing it to eventually topple and stop moving.

A gyroscope is essentially a coin suspended in a ring. When the coin is spun but the ring remains still, the coin eventually topples as before. However, when the ring is spun while the coin spins, Newton's First Law of Motion (a body in motion moving in a constant speed in a straight line will continue to do so unless an unbalanced force acts upon it) kicks in. In short, when the coin's plane of rotation wants to shift so it can start falling, the force that spins the coin is countered by the spinning ring and instead of falling, the whole structure simply changes direction constantly.

Known as precession, the gyroscope's motions thus keep the axle of a spinning gyroscope pointing in the same direction and preventing it from falling. And there are at least five gyroscopes in Segway HT, which explains why people don't fall when riding it.

The gyroscope's functions are performed by the vestibular system in humans. A human walking (which is a sight Kamen intends to remove someday) is off-balance for the few moments it takes to lift one foot and move it forward or backward to take a step. Still, the human doesn't fall over because the vestibular system sends signals to the brain to keep him upright. Located in the inner ear, which also contains the sensory and nerve receptors for hearing, the vestibular system has three interconnected parts: the three semicircular canals, the utricle and the saccule.

The semicircular canals are set at right angles to each other, encompassing three dimensions to help maintain one's sense of balance when performing various functions. Each canal is filled with sensory hair cells not unlike those that pick up nerve impulses that are later translated to sound in the brain. (The proximity and similarity of these two systems may help explain why some genetic disorders such as Meniere's Disease and Usher Syndrome cause patients to suffer both hearing loss and balance problems, but that's another story.)

Head movements cause the fluid in the inner ear to shift, which triggers the nerve cells in the canals, and tells the brain that the person's head isn't upright at the moment. Hair cells in the utricle and saccule, on the other hand, tell the brain about the head's position when it isn't moving.

So how does the vestibular system work with gyroscopes to make the Segway HT work?

When a human walks, he automatically leans just a bit in the direction he intends to take and the vestibular system makes sure he doesn't fall as he moves. To recreate this sensation on the Segway HT, Kamen and his team developed an advanced computer system that had Microsoft green with envy.

When standing on the Segway HT, the rider (unconsciously) leans on the handlebars. Sensors read his weight and balance and tell the gyroscopes to keep him upright. The rider then moves forward.

When he stops moving, the person relaxes, leaning back just a bit to counter his momentum. The Segway HT sensors note the shift in weight and balance and stop accordingly.

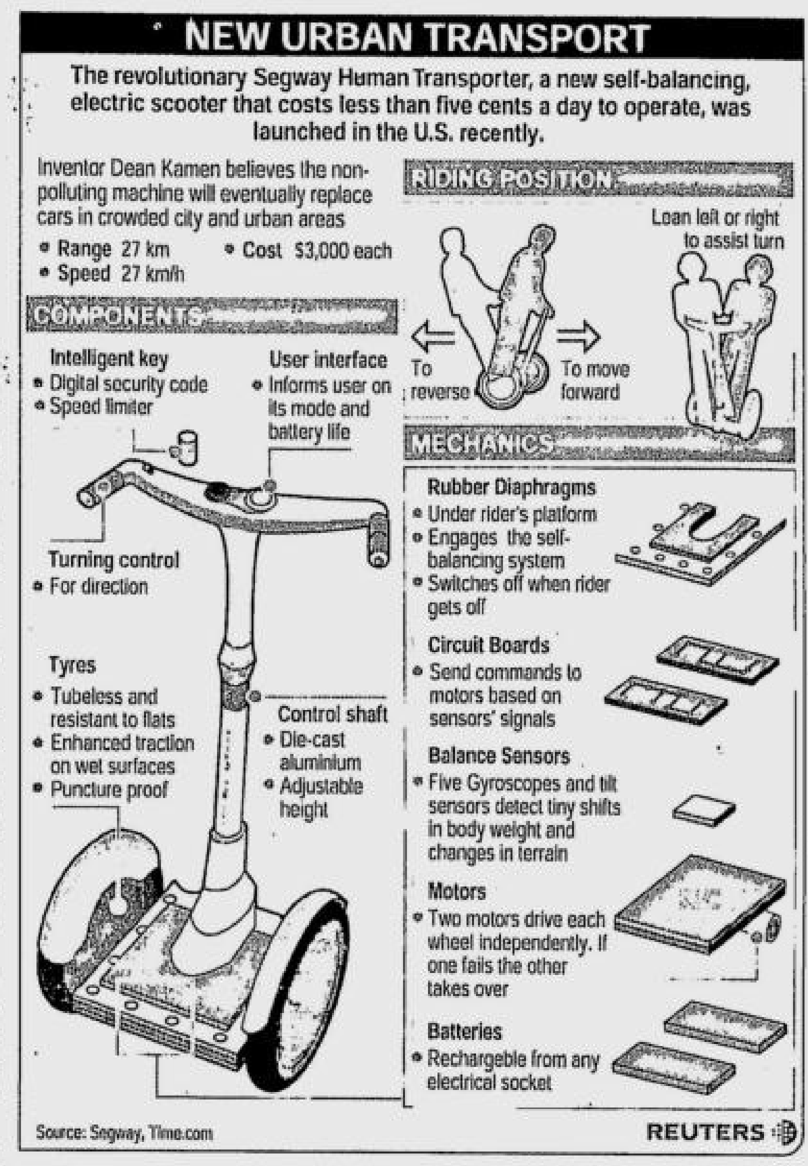
In a sense then, Kamen wasn't really lying when he said that riders simply have to think "stop" or "go" and the Segway HT would follow those instructions.

The biggest question though is whether or not Kamen's plan to remove this form of cardiovascular exercise (i.e., walking) from the streets will actually work. This is, after all, a machine that will be barreling down sidewalks at 26 kph rather than on the streets since they aren't considered vehicles.

Unless the expected consumer price of $3,000 goes down even more, and every pedestrian goes out and buys one, it's highly unlikely that Segway HT will become part of the Philippine transport system, or any other country's for that matter, anytime soon.

Until that day, or the day when cheaper knockoffs flood the market, it'll remain a toy for the extremely wealthy.

(Physics enthusiasts and other readers may contact the writer at massie@ massie.com.)


NEW URBAN TRANSPORT
The revolutionary Segway Human Transporter, a new self-balancing, electric scooter that costs less than five cents a day to operate, was launched in the U.S. recently.
Inventor Dean Kamen believes the non-polluting machine will eventually replace cars in crowded city and urban areas
• Range 27 km
• Speed 27 km/h
• Cost $3,000 each
COMPONENTS
Intelligent key
• Digital security code
• Speed limiter
User interface
• Informs user on its mode and battery life
Turning control
• For direction
Tyres
• Tubeless and resistant to flats
• Enhanced traction on wet surfaces
• Puncture proof
Control shaft
• Die-cast aluminium
• Adjustable height
RIDING POSITION
To reverse
To move forward
Lean left or right to assist turn
MECHANICS
Rubber Diaphragms
• Under rider's platform
• Engages the self-balancing system
• Switches off when rider gets off
Circuit Boards
• Send commands to motors based on sensors' signals
Balance Sensors
• Five Gyroscopes and tilt sensors detect tiny shifts in body weight and changes in terrain
Motors
• Two motors drive each wheel independently. If one fails the other takes over
Batteries
• Rechargeble from any electrical socket

Source: Segway, Time.com

REUTERS

Christmas puzzles

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

IT'S time for our annual Christmas puzzle contest. This time the puzzles came from three readers.

First, we listen to Rolly Lacson [rrlacson@skyinet.net]. He says, "Attached is a math poser from a magazine many years ago. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the name of the magazine nor the author. I am writing this from memory. I have tried to find the answer, but I have failed up to now. My level of math is only up to elementary algebra and trigonometry. It is only lately that I began to improve my knowledge of math by reading books and articles like yours. I am sending you this puzzle in the hope that you or some of your readers can help give the answer. Thank you."

I am pleased that you are doing math puzzles, and thank you for this puzzler. In fact, elementary algebra is more than enough. I now challenge my readers, who have never failed me yet. Here is Rolly's puzzle.

There were three robbers who lived near a banana farm. They owned a pet monkey. One night, they stole a bunch of bananas and hid it near their house, with the understanding that the next morning, they will divide it equally (whole fingers) among the three of them. Whatever remains will be given to the monkey.

Since they are robbers, they do not trust each other. So while the others are asleep, one robber woke up and went to the hiding place. He counted the fingers of the bunch, divided them into three parts and found that there was an extra banana. He gave it to the monkey, got his third of the bananas, and hid it in another place.

The second robber also woke up a bit later, also went to where they originally hid the bananas, counted what was left (after the first robber got his third), and divided the remaining bananas into three parts. There was also one extra banana, which he gave to the monkey. He got one third of the bananas and hid it in another place.

The third robber then woke up, went to the original hiding place, counted what was left (after the first and second robbers got their perceived shares), and divided the remainder into three parts. Again, one extra banana was given to the monkey. He got his share and hid it.

All three robbers woke up the next morning and went to the original hiding place of the bananas. They counted what was left, divided the bananas into three equal parts, and found one extra, which they gave to the monkey.

What is the least number of bananas (fingers) in the original bunch (before the robbers did any dividing)?

***

The second puzzle comes from a colleague, who wants to remain anonymous, now taking up further studies in Singapore. He says, "It is amazing to find out that people are really interested in topics like math and science, but of course it takes people like you to sustain their interest. Here is a problem in discrete math which can be interesting to readers. I got it from one of Prof. Lee Peng Yee's classes in the National Institute of Education. I don't think it's a new problem, but I made some modifications to contextualize it. Here it is."

Petra goes to Mang Kiko's sari-sari store to buy a pack of Chocnut for P5. She gives Mang Kiko a P10-bill and then Mang Kiko gives her five one-peso coins for her change, without realizing that one of them is counterfeit. Petra (who is a smart girl) hurries back home and takes a balance to identify the counterfeit coin. How would she identify it?

What is the minimum number of times she has to use the balance to identify the fake coin?

What is the minimum number of times she has to use the balance to determine whether the counterfeit is heavier or lighter than the genuine one?

If Petra claims that she can identify the fake coin and determine whether it is heavier or lighter than the genuine in no more than three weighings, would you believe her? Why or why not?

***

Our last puzzle comes from a Xavier High School student, Timothy Yusun of 8th Street., New Manila, Quezon City.

What is the smallest whole number, which when divided by the numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 will have a remainder of 1?

I now challenge all of you readers to submit your solutions to the three problems above. I am giving you a month for this—entries should reach me (by e-mail, courier, or snail mail) by Jan. 22, 2002. The first one to send in all correct and detailed solutions will receive an autographed copy of any of my books. Send your answers as soon as you can.

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Understanding depression

BLUES... discouragement... mood changes... sadness... these are just among the names commonly associated with depression. But what exactly is depression?

Dr. Eduardo L. Jurilla, Psychiatry section head of Asian Hospital and Medical Center (AHMC), an acute tertiary care hospital soon to open in Alabang, defines depression as a "whole-body" illness involving the body, mood and thoughts.

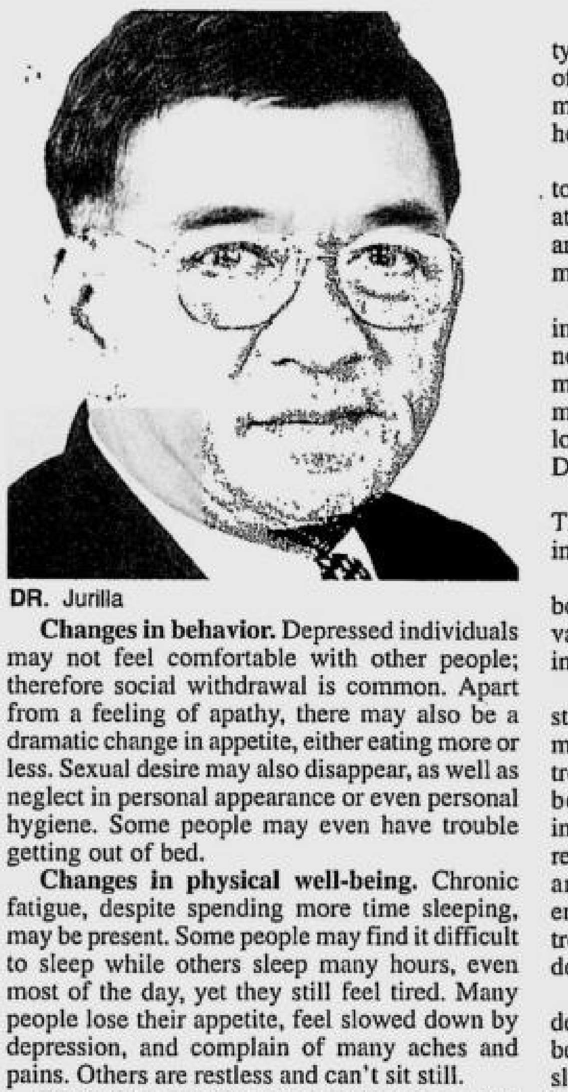
"A depression may be a reaction to an unhappy event," states Dr. Jurilla, who is a Diplomate and a Fellow both of the Philippine Psychiatric Association and the Philippine Neurological Association. "It is natural to have some depressed feelings after a loss such as the death of a relative, or after a major disappointment at home or at work."

No one is immune from depression. In fact, it is one of the most common mental disorders throughout the world. It occurs in all people of all social classes, all countries and all cultural settings.

Having introduced the Lithium treatment in patients suffering from manic-depressive illness, Dr. Jurilla explains that there are some considerations to be taken before someone can be diagnosed as suffering from depressive disorder. The symptoms of depression may vary from person to person, and also depend on the severity of the depression but the four major areas that should be looked upon carefully are the changes in thinking, feeling, behavior and physical well-being.

Changes in thinking. Negative thought, pessimism, poor self-esteem, excessive guilt and self-criticism are all common. Self-destructive thoughts may also be present during a more serious depression. There is overworrying about minor problems. Concentration, attention span and memory may be affected.

Changes in feelings. There may come a time when one feels sad for no reason at all. Some even lack enthusiasm for activities that they find pleasurable before and may even feel tired all the time. Irritability becomes a problem and there is difficulty controlling one's temper.



DR. Jurilla

Changes in behavior. Depressed individuals may not feel comfortable with other people; therefore social withdrawal is common. Apart from a feeling of apathy, there may also be a dramatic change in appetite, either eating more or less. Sexual desire may also disappear, as well as neglect in personal appearance or even personal hygiene. Some people may even have trouble getting out of bed.

Changes in physical well-being. Chronic fatigue, despite spending more time sleeping, may be present. Some people may find it difficult to sleep while others sleep many hours, even most of the day, yet they still feel tired. Many people lose their appetite, feel slowed down by depression, and complain of many aches and pains. Others are restless and can't sit still.

Dr. Jurilla maintains that depression is present if most of these symptoms are experienced for at least several weeks or even months. Once diagnosed, a psychiatrist can assess which type of depression a patient falls under. The following are the main types of depression according to the intensity of the symptoms:

- **Major depression**—This is the most serious type of depression in terms of number and severity of symptoms. Some people with major depression may either have suicidal tendencies or history of hospitalizations.
- **Dysthymic disorder**—This refers to a low to moderate level of depression that persists for at least two years and longer. While symptoms are not as severe as major depression, they are more enduring and resistant to treatment.
- **Unspecified depression**—This category includes people with a serious depression, but not quite severe enough to have a diagnosis of a major depression, as well as people with chronic, moderate depression, which has not been present long enough for a diagnosis of a Dysthymic Disorder.
- **Adjustment disorder, with depression**—This category describes depression that occurs in response to a major life crisis.
- **Bipolar depression**—This type includes both high and low mood swings, as well as a variety of other significant symptoms not present in other depressions.

As complicated as it may sound, depression still remains to be the one of the most treatable mental illnesses. Depressed patients can be treated through psychotherapy, medication or both. Psychotherapy helps the depressed individual to ease the pain of depression by recognizing which problems are critical and which are not, developing positive outlook and enhancing one's ability to cope. The length of treatment varies depending on the severity of depression.

Medical treatment in the form of antidepressants, on the other hand, helps one to feel better by controlling certain symptoms, such as sleep and eating disturbances, chronic fatigue. However, Dr. Jurilla stresses that antidepressant medications should be taken under strict medical supervision.

Nonetheless, Dr. Jurilla agrees that it is best to tell someone trustworthy about the problem—more often than not, talking about it eases the burden.

Drinking water rediscovered

A STUDY by the Journal of the American Dietetics Association found that 25 percent of American adolescents take in more than two cans of cola every day. Most of the kids are therefore missing out on nutrients like calcium, riboflavin, Vitamins A and C.

No need to give up on soft drinks. However, for the required nutrients, one has to get them from other sources. Just don't forget to watch the overall calorie intake. So, the catch call is "Grab a drink for health!" What usually comes to mind? This time, it doesn't have to be milk, juice or any sports drink—it's water!

Don't forget, water is essential to health. Getting enough water means keeping your body properly hydrated to stay healthy. An average of 55 to 75 percent of an adult's body is water. That's something like 10 to 12 gallons of water.

Drinking eight to 10 glasses of water or water-based beverage every day is recommended by doctors. When the heat is on, or when exercising or doing some strenuous work--whatever it is—one will need more water.

Beverages like coffee, tea and colas which are caffeine-based, act as diuretics. Alcohol has an even greater negative effect. The poser is: how can people learn to drink water religiously? One way—perhaps, the best way—is to make the water great tasting.

ATT-Aqua Treatment Technology, a leader in water filtration, through the John Sprints Corp., has rediscovered drinking water. The company has succeeded in making water taste exactly like one's favorite fruit. It will soon be your perfect fruit drink.

To experience it is to smell and drink the John Springs purified or mineral flavored water in bottles. Having zero calories, it is packed with ascorbic acid for fighting off infections in the body. Working, attending school, doing fieldwork these days demand a lot of stamina and persistence and plenty of water to drink. The new John Springs healthy drink is your favorite fruit in refreshing water!

ASK THE DENTIST

PAUL R. DE CASTRO, DMD

Mouth bleeding

I REGULARLY see my dentist once a year for cleaning but I still have a problem where one side of my mouth bleeds. I cannot understand why one side of my mouth is healthy while the other side is not although I brush my teeth evenly. What kind of bacteria attacks only one side of a person's mouth?

Wally K.

Your problem is very typical. I usually get patients who have more problematic gums on one side, more tartar on one side or more bleeding on one side. It isn't because they brush and take care of only one side of the mouth; rather, they chew on one side only. Some people avoid chewing on one side because they think that portion of the mouth is weak and they are preserving teeth on that side by doing so.

But the opposite is true. The more you use your teeth for chewing, the healthier they get because of the massaging effect of the food on the teeth and gums.

Everyone has a favorite side for chewing but they should not neglect the other side completely. If one side seems too tender for chewing, start that side off by chewing soft foods first or chew food that was already partially chewed by your preferred side. And try to see your dentist twice a year for cleaning.

(Your questions are welcome at dentalqs@yahoo.com. The author is a general and cosmetic dentist licensed here and in the United States.)

Having a fun but safe Xmas

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN

Christmas is a time for family get-togethers and fun. But sometimes it is easy for merrymakers to forget the hidden dangers during the festive season.

The mention of Christmas makes most people think of fireworks. Unfortunately for many, these days will also involve a visit to the hospital emergency room. Each year hospitals treat so many people for fireworks-related injuries. A majority of the victims are children and young adults. Injuries range from eye impairment to mild and severe burns from fireworks.

A common misconception is that only big firecrackers, such as *sawa* and *super lolo*, cause injuries. Although these do cause the most severe harm, many fireworks-related injuries are caused by the smaller types like the mini rocket, Roman candle and *watusi*.

This year, the Department of Health is once more campaigning for a safe celebration of the Yuletide. Under its *Iwas Paputok* campaign, the DOH advocates nonharmful, noise-generating activities like banging pots and pans, playing loud music and honking of car horns.

"The best way to prevent injuries is to leave fireworks to the professionals. Firecrackers and even sparklers all present a serious risk that can largely be avoided if people watch professional fireworks displays," says one health official.

IWAS. PAPUTOK
DOH
JED E.

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

These are some of the reasons why firecrackers aren't the best means to celebrate the season:

Burns from exploding firecrackers. One of the obvious dangers from firecrackers is getting burned as they explode. People get eye injuries from them and flammable objects can catch on fire.

Time and again, the DOH has been issuing warnings on the use of firecrackers. It had even banned some firecrackers a few years back and regulated the manufacture of others. With a sustained campaign, the DOH was able to whittle down the number of firecracker-related injuries.

Watusi ingestion. Children often find these innocent-looking red pellets irresistible. But these seemingly harmless dancing firecrackers can cause serious injury when ingested.

A watusi contains an extremely fatal chemical, yellow phosphorous, which is corrosive to the stomach and intestinal walls. The poison's manifestation occurs in the first 48 hours wherein a victim suffers hypocalcemia, or lowering of calcium blood level, shock, acidosis (excessive acid in the body) and irregular heartbeat. If the victim survives this phase, he may not be really safe as liver dysfunction and coagulation disorders can follow.

Tetanus from firecrackers. You may already be aware that stepping on a rusty nail or having a puncture wound could cause a tetanus infection, a bacterial disease that affects the nervous system and is often fatal. What you may not know is that tetanus bacteria can also enter the body through tiny pinpricks and even firecracker burns that break the skin.

The DOH has noted that firecrackers have become a primary source of tetanus infection during Yuletide. Some firecracker manufacturers use animal manure to make their products explode louder. But animal manure is usually a breeding ground for tetanus bacteria that could infect victims who get injuries from firecracker explosion.

Be aware of the first signs of tetanus infection, including stiffness of the neck, difficulty swallowing, rigidity of abdominal muscles, spasms, sweating and fever. Symptoms usually begin eight days after infection, but occur anywhere within three days to three weeks.

The best defense against tetanus is vaccination. Tetanus vaccination is one of the recommended childhood immunizations and should begin at infancy.

Firecracker risks on pets. Firecrackers affect your pets physically and psychologically. Have you noticed you pet dog or cat getting restless during the New Year's Eve revelry? The noise bothers them a lot and gives them much distress.

Veterinarians advise pet owners not to take their pets near fireworks. Pets are best kept indoors far from the deafening sounds and dangerous explosions.

Managing stress during the holidays

PREPARATIONS for the holidays can often be a source of stress, which is often aggravated in those who suffer from ailments like arthritis pain and inflammation. Activities like baking, cooking, decorating, shopping, wrapping gifts, visiting friends and relatives and having parties can put a damper on the festive spirit when bones and joints begin to hurt and physical fatigue sets in.

University of Sto. Tomas Hospital rheumatologist Dr. Lyndon Llamado listed down the following to help manage holiday stress.

- Avoid shopping in the evenings or during the weekends when malls tend to be too crowded. Use catalogs and the Internet to avoid having to go to the malls.
- Wear comfortable clothes and flat shoes. Dress in light clothing that can be easily removed when you get home to keep you from getting warm while you move about, which adds more stress to the body.
- Acknowledge your limitations when it comes to attending parties and socializing. Get adequate rest.
- Pamper yourself by getting your hair done, having a massage, or indulging in some other form of self-care at the parlor or spa.
- Volunteer in charitable activities that can shift your focus to other people's needs and pains.
- Cook simple recipes with minimal steps or check out the local supermarket for pre-packed gift baskets and ready-to-cook meals.
- Wrap presents using gift bags and baskets or shop in stores that offer gift-wrapping services.
- Do not lift heavy objects when decorating or preparing for parties and dinners to keep you from putting unnecessary strain on your joints. If you are carrying a shopping bag, use one of your palms to support the bag while you balance the rest of it with your other hand. It is best not to use your fingers to carry bags because this can strain your joints.
- Make a New Year's resolution to begin an exercise and fitness program that works to help increase your mobility.
- Consult your doctor to find out about medications to complement these stress management tips. COX-2 specific inhibitors have been proven effective in relieving joint pain and inflammation, but it's best to check with your doctor first.

China offers malaria cure

THE BEST hope for a cure to malaria is emerging in China, which is developing highly effective medicines to combat the deadly disease, the World Health Organization said.

The new treatments combine the derivative of a traditional herb called *qing hao-su*, or artemisinin, an extremely powerful anti-malarial agent, with modern synthetic drugs, the WHO regional office in Manila said.

China was developing at least four kinds of treatment, "which could save thousands of lives every day," WHO's Western Pacific regional director Shigeru Omi declared in a statement.

"This is why we're trying to speed up the process," he said, citing international support for the development of treatments, particularly in the field of clinical trials, assessment of safety and production quality.

WHO said the combination of the herb and modern drugs "have a cure rate of more than 95 percent" against malaria, which kills about one million people annually.

Malaria affects some 300 million people a year.

The new therapies stand out from the many other anti-malarial treatments because they only need to be taken for three days, compared to weeks-long treatments for other drugs. They also use compounds that the malaria parasite had yet to develop resistance to and were likely to be cheap enough for the poor to afford.

China rediscovered artemisinin about 25 years ago. Historical records show that it had long been used to treat fever and probably malaria.

According to WHO, it can kill "99 percent" of malaria parasites within 48 hours. But to completely cure infections, it has to be taken for a week. However, many people stop treatment after two days.

"They feel better and want to save on the drugs," said Allan Schapira, WHO Western Pacific regional adviser on malaria. "Then they become ill again after a few weeks."

Experts fear this could also lead to the malaria parasite becoming resistant to artemisinin. The malaria parasite's growing resistance to many drugs, including chloroquine, one of the cheapest drugs available, has been a major setback to malaria control. *AFP*

Fertility watch

LONDON—Knowing when the time is right to try for a baby can soon be as easy as checking the time of day or month.

Pheromone Sciences of Vancouver, Canada, has developed a wristwatch-like gadget that tells women when they are about to ovulate and are most likely to conceive.

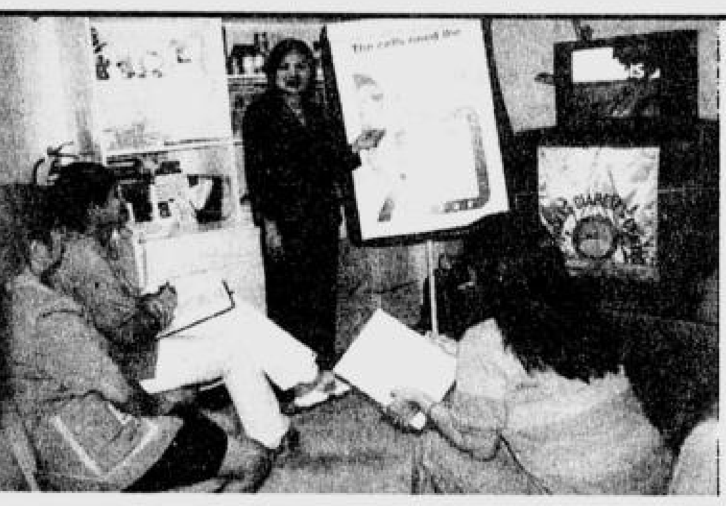
"It works by measuring changes in the acidity of sweat. This is determined by hormone levels which indicate the woman's fertility status," according to New Scientist magazine.

The PSC Fertility Monitor can indicate if a woman is fertile, nonfertile or ovulating. Worn at night while sleeping, it includes a chemical sensor and microprocessor that calculates the changes that are displayed on the face of the device or sent to a computer.

"Trials show that the device correctly predicts ovulation to within two days in 76 percent of subjects," the magazine said.

Women are usually most fertile and likely to ovulate halfway through their monthly cycle, usually days 10-17. But many women may not fit the general pattern and will have a much more variable fertility window. *Reuters*

DIABETES EDUCATION



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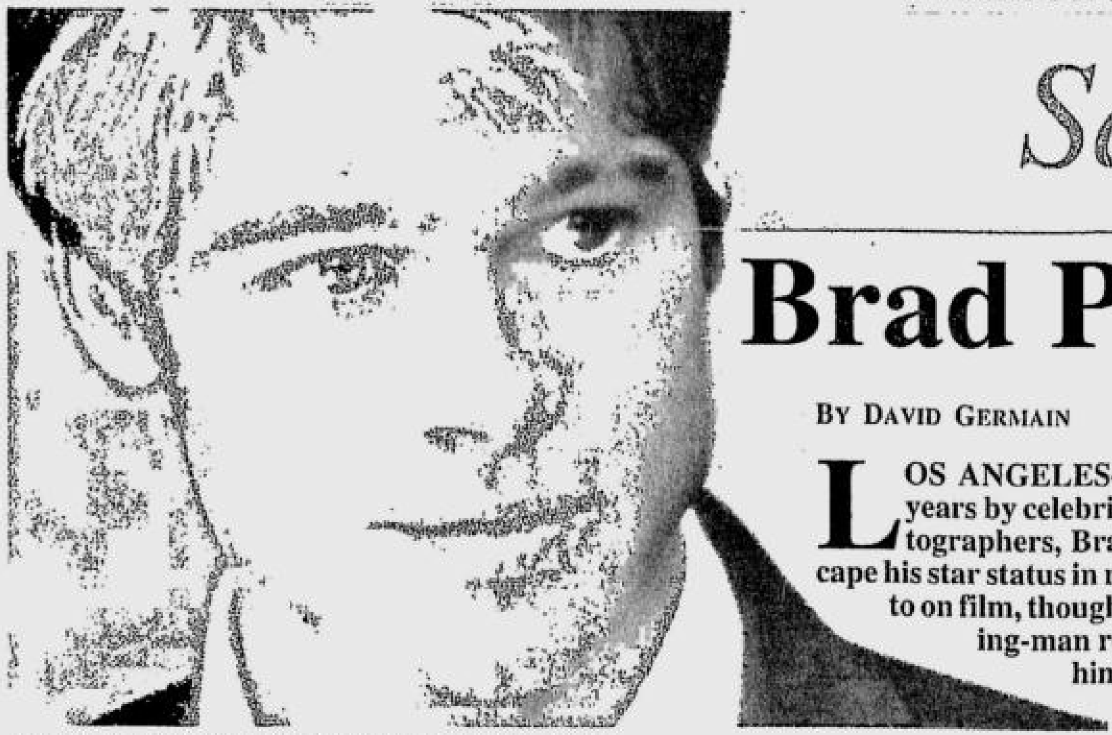
PITT. Likes to subsume himself in ensemble pieces.

Brad Pitt enjoys being famous

By David Germain

LOS ANGELES—Hounded for years by celebrity-chasing photographers, Brad Pitt can't escape his star status in real life. He tries to on film, though, forgoing leading-man roles to subsume himself in ensemble pieces in films like "12 Monkeys" and "Interview With the Vampire."

After a couple of years of burying himself in what he calls "more obscure and subversive things"—"Flight Club," "Snatch," and "The Mexican"—Pitt chose some more commercial and accessible projects. He costars with Robert Redford in the espionage thriller "Spy Game" and plays one of the marquee-name cogs in the casino-heist remake of "Ocean's Eleven," featuring George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Matt Damon and Andy

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Amy Austria meets her toughest thespic challenge

BY NESTOR U. TORRE

SOME movie people wonder why Marilou Diaz-Abaya keeps casting Amy Austria as the female lead of her major productions, like "Muro-Ami," and now, "Bagong Buwan." After all, Amy is no longer all that active in the movies, isn't as young as she used to be, and makes only modest waves at the box office.

Acclaimed

Since she's an acclaimed director and a hitmaker to boot, Abaya could easily have her pick of the biggest female superstars in the land, and yet she keeps opting for Amy. What gives?

The mystery clears up instantly when you watch Amy's performance in a film. She wasn't on the screen that long in "Muro-Ami," and yet she was able to come up with a tough, raw and vulnerable performance.

When Amy performs, it's like she's sharing a vital part of her life with you. This is "confessional" acting of the most generous, honest and selfless sort.

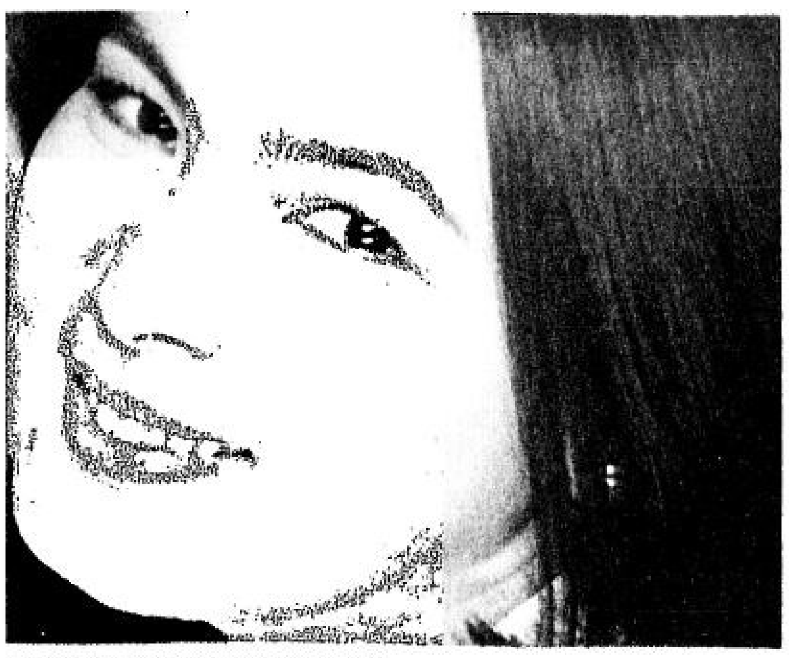
Amy may not be schooled in the finer nuances of the thespic art, but her performances speak with even greater eloquence than more methodically-crafted portrayals. She has an instinct for what her screen character thinks and feels, and is able to make this instinctive understanding vividly empathetic for viewers.

Signature screen image

This is a feat that only few actress can manage, because many of them are so wrapped up in themselves and their signature screen image that they can't be completely at the service of the characters they play.

She has even been able to transform her perceived limitations into distinct advantages: Since she's no longer all that visible a star, she doesn't have to conform to any expectations on the public's part about how she should look and act on the screen.

Since she is no longer an ingenue, she can play complex roles that would swamp a less experienced actress. Since she doesn't have to "carry" a film, she need not worry about making self-serving star turns that could detract from the integrity of her performances.



AUSTRIA. "Confessional" acting.

Freedom

The 'freedom' she enjoys as a screen performer has also made her one of the most versatile actresses we have. Take her performances in "Muro-Ami" and "Bagong Buwan"—they are as different as night and day.

In "Muro-Ami," she played a loser who lived her life on a hope and a prayer, a veritable reject of society who still dared to dream and to love. In "Bagong Buwan," she's a Muslim nurse, wife and mother who wants only the best for her family, only to suddenly have to contend with the death of her young son, and the gradual involvement in the Muslim cause of her doctor-husband (Cesar Montano).

So, Amy had to plumb the depths and dregs of emotion to vivify a loving mother's bereavement at the death of her only son—and yet, she didn't have the luxury of remaining at that bleak level, because she had a husband to save from himself.

Combination

This is a tough thespic challenge that only an actress with Amy's combination of sensitivity and strength can meet, and "Bagong Buwan" is the richer for it.

Even when she was playing sexy roles in the '80s, Amy already impressed viewers with the force and focus of her screen portrayals. Her stock as an actress rose further when she played challenging roles in creditable films like "Brutal," "Paano Ba ang Mangarap," "Hinugot sa Langit" and "Anak."

When "Bagong Buwan" finally opens its run in a few days' time, it's likely that film buffs will hail Amy's performance in it as one of the best in her entire career. This would be a big boost for her, and our hope is that it will prompt other filmmakers to cast her in complex roles in their own productions.

Occasional performances are fine, but Amy is too good a talent to be seen so seldom on the screen. May 2002 be the best and most productive film year for Amy Austria.

Brad Pitt enjoys being famous

(From page C1)

Garcia. And there was his Thanksgiving night guest spot opposite wife Jennifer Aniston on "Friends" (playing a high-school enemy of Aniston's character).

"You could call it shameless self-promotion in conjunction with a film release, and that's part of it," Pitt said, referring to the TV episode airing a day after "Spy Game" opened. "On the other hand, it's working with my wife, which I wanted to do, and working on this show that has this incredible ability just to make you happy.

Laughter

"The third factor is; I see laughter as very important in this time" considering the terrorist attacks, Pitt said. "If we're entertainers, and some would argue with that, but if we are, let's get out and entertain."

Pitt, 37, spoke over a burger, fries and a couple of cigarettes—after requesting this interview to respond to fallout from recent comments he made in print.

In its December issue, Vanity Fair ran a cover story on Pitt which he discussed going into therapy off and on for a year and a half. Misreading his quotes, some TV and online outlets reported that Pitt admitted having a nervous breakdown. Vanity Fair issued a news release stating that Pitt did not have a breakdown and that news organizations had misinterpreted his statements.

Such misinterpretations are "reckless journalism," said Pitt, who studied journalism in college. "I know it's a competitive market and everyone wants to scoop. But to me it's a dangerous road we're going down. I don't see a bull's eye on my back . . . But it's OK for me. I'll be the fruit loop of the month, if you want me to. I don't mind, really."

Another magazine article early this year, when Pitt's "The Mexican" hit theaters, had the actor calling former President Clinton a phony over how he handled his extramarital flings.

Admirer

For the record, Pitt said he remains an admirer and that his comments were taken out of context. The "Clinton is a phony" quote came during a discussion of how American's do not "want our leaders to be human or completely honest," Pitt said. "We need them to fake their way through it."

"The last thing I wanted to do was participate in any kind of Clinton bashing," Pitt said. "He's been my absolute favorite as long as I can remember. Out of respect to him, I want to set that straight."

And for the record, Pitt said he did not have a nervous breakdown. He intended his comments as a positive discussion about how he benefited from therapy.

"Nothing more than taking a class on yourself, a semester. It doesn't mean you have to be in some psychological peril or have these problems from childhood that are dictating your life," Pitt said. "I found it actually a very positive experience, and I chose to talk about it because I believe if everyone did it, we'd have very few conflicts. I certainly don't think we'd be at war right now if everyone had a couple of semesters on themselves.

"I found it as something very exciting a redirection of understanding," Pitt said. "The other issue is this. As I begin a family, as my wife and I begin a family, I don't want to pass on any dysfunctions, no matter how minor or innocuous they might be. I don't want to pass the disease on to my kids. I want to get as clean as I can for them."

Baby

Which begs a side trip to another false news report last summer, that Pitt and Aniston, who married in July 2000, were expecting a baby. Pitt said they plan to have children, but that's down the road.

"I don't know how near that is and won't know any time soon," he said. "I don't want to go there till I'm absolutely ready to put them first. On the other hand, I keep saying anything that will take the focus off myself, I'm all for."

Still, you won't hear a lamentation over the horrors of life as one of Hollywood's top stars from Pitt.

"Let me say, I've got a fantastic life," Pitt said. "I've never enjoyed it more than these last few years. I want that clear. It's not difficult to take millions of dollars and get to work with interesting people." *AP*

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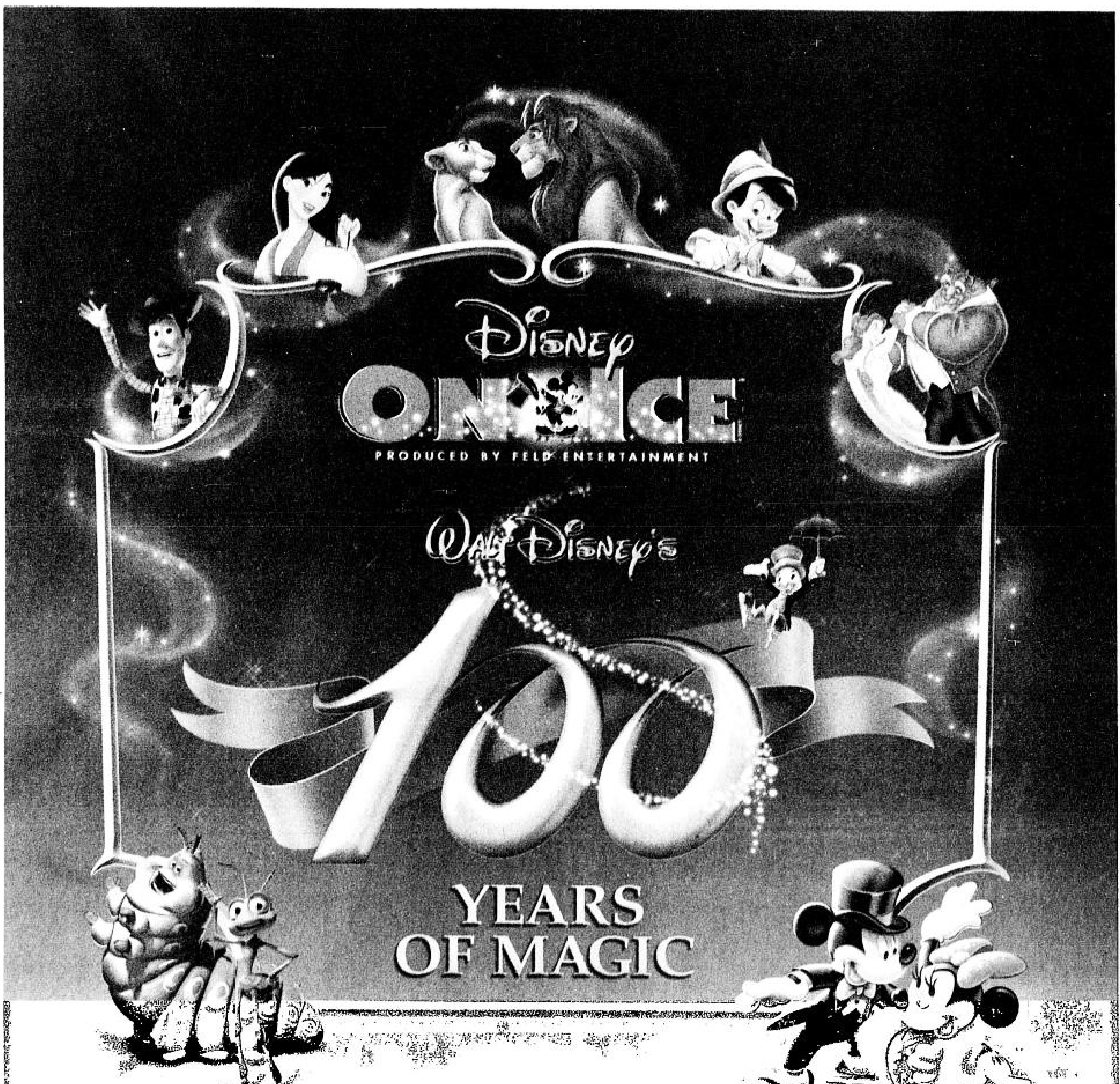

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MONTAGE

“DISNEY on Ice” celebrates 100 years of Disney magic starting today until Jan. 6, 2002 at the Araneta Coliseum.

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Tickets are available at all SM Ticketnet outlets. To discover more about the show, log on to www.DisneyOnIce.com.

Pops’ concert series

Pops Fernandez entertains audiences in an evening that blends heartfelt conversation with the best of her musical repertoire in her concert series at Onstage starting Jan.4 and on all Fridays and Saturdays of January, 2002.

The concert series is presented by Arian Works Management Corporation. Call 723-6049.

Lea stars in ‘Proof’

Atlantis Productions presents David Auburn's “proof” starring Jan. 9 at the GSIS Theater. The Pulitzer-Prize-winning play will be seen everyday except Mondays and Saturdays.

Heading the cast is international star Lea Salonga, fresh from a successful stint in “The Flower Drum Song” in Los Angeles. Others in the cast are Michael de Mesa, Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo and Joel Trinidad. Direction is by Bobby Garcia.

“Proof is about Catherine (Salonga), daughter of a mathematical genius (De Mesa) who is afraid that she might have inherited her father's dementia. The play contains very strong language. Parental guidance is recommended.

‘Lord of the Rings’ premiere

The Ateneo Celadon together with the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and K-Lite present the premiere of “The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings” tomorrow, Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. at SM Megamall Cinema 10.

“The Lord of the Rings” is a trilogy written by J. R. R. Tolkien and directed by Peter Jackson and features Cate Blanchett, Elijah Wood, Christopher Lee and Liv Tyler.

Zsa Zsa’s new album

Zsa Zsa Padilla is back on the recording scene with the release of her latest album “In My Life...Zsa Zsa Live.” The album will be formally launched tomorrow on “ASAP” where Zsa Zsa is one of the regular hosts.

The album contains revivals of hits like Jackie de Shannon's “What the World Needs Now,” Aretha Franklin's “I Say a Little Prayer,” and Cyndi Lauper's “Time After Time.”

Also included is a medley of Louie Ocampo's hits like “Tell Me,” “Ikaw Lang ang Mamahalin,” “Kahit Isang Saglit” and “Point of No Return.”

Ogie and Lani at EK

Enchanted Kingdom celebrates the Yuletide season with a grand musical treat that features the balladeer OgieAlcasid and Asia's Nightingale Lani Misalucha today at 6:30 p.m.

The pre-Christmas treat promises a night of beautiful music, from pop ballads to OPM hits to Christmas carols. Musical director is Tats Faustino.

Tickets are available at the venue. For reservations, call 843-6073. (***Compiled by Edmund L. Sicam***)

“DISNEY ON ICE.” Well-loved stories and characters.

Andrews defends controversial movie about priests

By Edmund L. Sicam

BOBBY Andrews, who has embarked on a new career as a character actor, stars in the movie “Susmaryosep! (Four Fathers)”, the official entry of Maverick Films to the 2001 Metro Manila Film Festival, along with Bojo Molina, Polo Ravales and Gerald Madrid. In the movie, Bobby plays Father EP who finds out after entering the priesthood, that he has a child by his former girlfriend. The other “priests” in the film, have more controversial stories to tell. Bojo's character, Fr. Mon, is an activist. Polo's Jojo is a hot-blooded seminarian and Gerald's Fr. Dondon is a gay priest. This early, there have been protests from the religious sector against the showing of the film.

Contemporary look

Bobby feels that the controversy is misplaced. “We're not picking on the priests, it's more of a contemporary look at society as a whole. As part of society, we follow rules and regulations. I guess the best example of a class having strict rules and regulations would be the priesthood. That was the venue that was chosen to bring out moral problems people face nowadays, moral issues.”

The young actor is slightly disappointed that the movie received an R rating from the MTRCB.

The actor feels that the movie should have been made available to a broader audience to make the public aware of the hardships of the priesthood. “Priesthood is never forced on anyone *e*, it's a calling. Wake up call *din ito sa mga seminarista*, and people thinking of entering the priesthood. Because once you enter, there's no turning back. It's like marriage, for better or for worse.”

Bobby cites his character in the movie as an example. “I became a priest, with no knowledge whatsoever that I had a family. So I have to make a decision. So it's not as if I went against my beliefs as a priest. It was more na these were the circumstances that were handed out to me. I had to choose between my priesthood and my family. So there's the moral dilemma there.”

Bobby feels for his character because he believes Fr. EP was still true to his calling. “*Kasi* he served as faithfully as he could. But the problem is, he realized, he has a family.”

Positive experiences

Bobby says he has some very positive experiences in his life with members of the clergy and has nothing but respect for them. He cites Fr. Makacan, his high school counselor at the Ateneo. “He was very influential in my life. During my high school days, *doon ko na*-experience *lahat ng* ups and downs *sa buhay ko*. And it was with his help that I was able to get through it without taking drugs or straying from the right path. So I appreciate that,” he recalls gratefully.

At present, Bobby feels he is still in a transition period as an actor. What he is doing right now is looking for his own niche in the Philippine show biz scene. But in spite of all the uncertainty, he is happy because he is able to tackle all kinds of parts – even *contravida* roles – without fear of going against the heartthrob image he projected before.

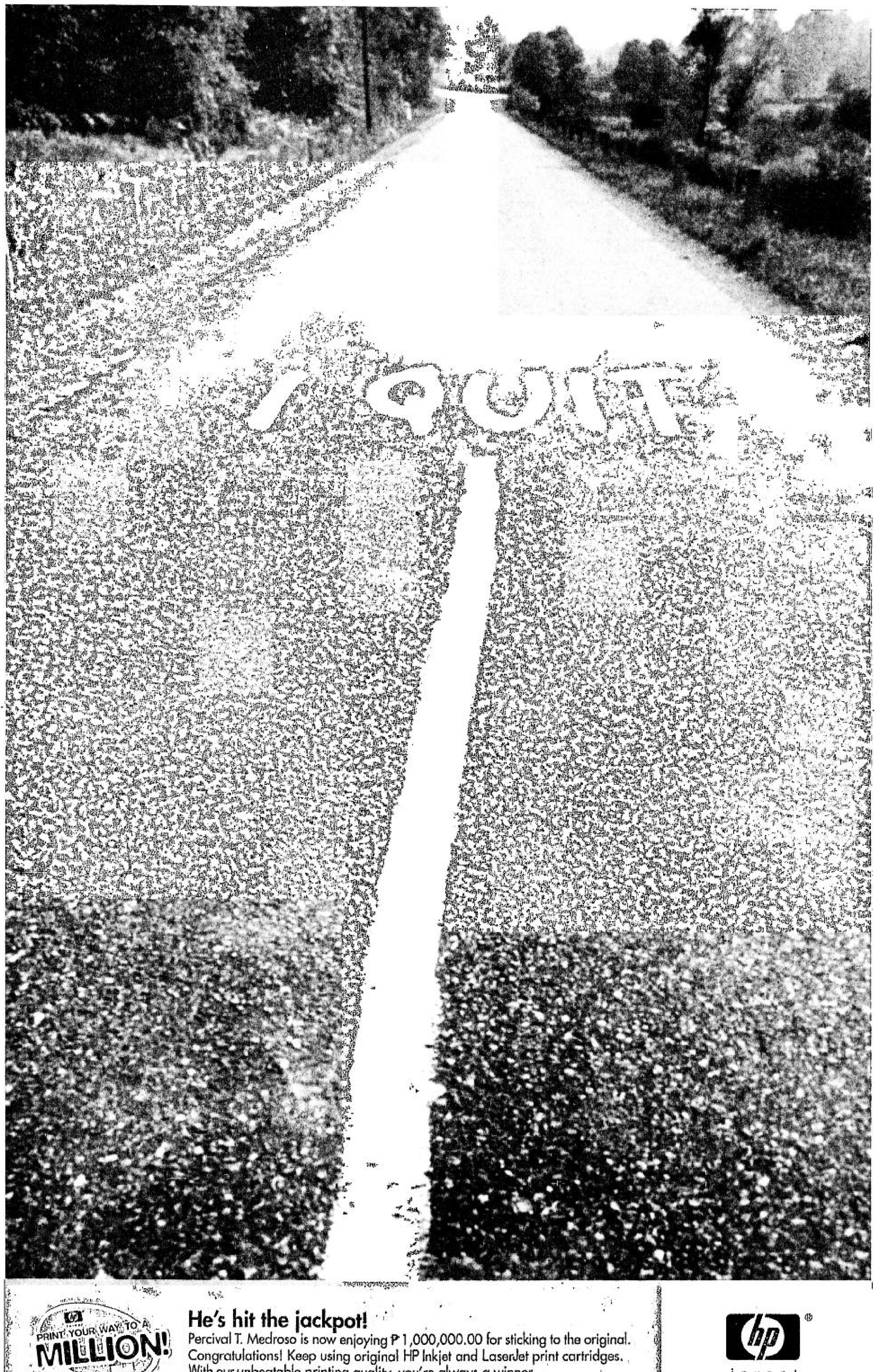
Freedom

He enjoys the freedom he has when it comes to his career now that he is no longer a part of a love team. He feels that now he can really grow as an actor.

Bobby says that as an actor, you really have to gamble on your career and play different kinds of roles.

During his “TGIS” days, Bobby Andrews was one of the most popular young actors around. Today, he plays supporting roles in movies and television, buthe isn't sad aboutit. Infact, he is more content with the quality of roles that he is getting now. “*Kasi* during that time, everything was so easy *e*. I was never really given roles which would push me, *di ba?* Now, *nacha*-challenge *talaga ako* as an actor.”

ANDREWS. Transition period.



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Celebrities savor their favorite holiday dishes

GIBBS. Craves for Australian cheeses.

By Jocelyn Valle

ASIDE from the gifts that we love to give and receive, what do we look forward to during the holidays? Food, of course! We can always make going to the gym our New Year's resolution, right?

Here are some stars' favorite holiday foods: "*Sawang-sawa na ako sa kare-kare, embotido, lechon…*" complains veteran actress and Lipa mayor Vilma Santos. "*Pero hindi siguro ako magsasawa sa mga* pasta dishes. *Pero* what I look forward to is having a hot cup of chocolate-*eh*! *Hindi mawawala 'yan kapag* Pasko.

"Ito '*yung naka*-tablet form *na ginagawang* chocolate drink. *Tapos, lalagyan mo ng* peanut butter *at saka mo sasamahan ng ensaymada* with white cheese. '*Yun ang* heaven!"

Young star

Model-turned-actress Angel Aquino and young star Angelica Panganiban agree. Angelica also likes ham, chicken and spaghetti.

Aside from ham, award-winning actress Lorna Tolentino is content with typical *noche buena* fare like *quezo de bola* and fruits.

Jo Ramos concurs: "I love fruits and during the Christmas season *nandoon lahat ng* fresh fruits. Fruit salad is my favorite—so festively decorated and creatively mixed!"

Favorite

Fruit salad is also the favorite of broadcaster and Sen. Noli de Castro, "MTB" and "Whattamen" regular Marvin Agustin, and Sunshine Cruz. "I love fruit salad. *Sa lahat ng hinahanda ng* mommy *ko*, '*yan ang* favorite *ko*," Sunshine enthuses.

Talented actress Jennifer Sevilla even prepares her own "special fruit salad." She also has a unique holiday ritual: Every year, she concocts a new sauce that she uses as marinade for the chicken she'll be frying, and she derives so much pleasure from her annual tradition. She is doubly pleased to feast on her mom's spaghetti and *mechado*.

Other popular holiday foods for celebrities are spaghetti and ham. Singer-actress Carol Banawa especially likes spaghetti if it's her mom who prepares it for her. Meanwhile, broadcaster Karen Davila is proud of her mother's ham. "'*Yun ang* super *sarap*!" she shrieks with glee. "There's nothing like it. My mom is Pampangueña and she's an excellent cook!"

Young singer-actress Nikki Valdez appreciates the way her mom prepares the spread for their *noche buena* that includes her favorite cold cuts and cakes. She also likes spaghetti with different sauces like tomato, carbonara and olive oil.

Australian cheeses

Singer-actor Janno Gibbs, who also hosts Channel 7's Sunday musical-variety show, "SOP," craves for the Australia cheeses his in-laws (Bing Loyzaga's parents live Down Under) send during the holidays. But what's truly special for him is the *pancit molo* that his mom lovingly cooks for him on New Year's Eve.

What makes songbird Regine Velasquez specially happy during the holidays? An extra helping of her mom's special *pininyahang manok*, that's it!

Actress-TV host ("Sis" and "S-Files," both seen on GMA 7) Janice de Belen, comedienne Ai Ai de las Alas and respected actress Boots Anson-Roa are all mothers and they share a passion for cooking, too.

Every year, Janice makes it a point to prepare her *noche buena* staples: turkey and paella, plus a few additional dishes. "I don't stuff my turkey," she shares, "because my family doesn't like it stuffed. *Siguro kasi ang* Pinoy *hindi ma*-appreciate '*yung* stuffing. So *ang* turkey *ko, parang* baked chicken *na may* cranberry *at saka* gravy."

Black paella

"'*Yung* paella *ko naman*," she continues, "the usual *lang*, but I can also make black paella. *Hindi siya mahirap gawin, maarte lang. Ngayon lang ako nagka-paellera. Sigurado na ang* turkey *at saka* paella *sa noche buena* this Christmas. Everything else is changeable, *depende sa* mood *namin*."

Ai Ai de las Alas' specialty is pasta carbonara. "*Basta may okasyon, 'yan ang hinahanda ko*," she avers.

At Boots Anson-Roa's potluck Christmas get-together with her in-laws, she usually takes on the assignment to prepare chicken asparagus soup. "It's Pete's favorite and it is also traditional in the family," she explains.

For heartthrob Diether Ocampo and singers Viktoria and Tin Arnaldo, Christmas won't be the same without *bibingka* and *puto bungbong*. "'*Yan an*… reason *kung bakit nagsi*-Simbang Gab… *ako*," he grins.

Another *noche buena* staple, "Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin's" resident *contravida*, LJ Moreno, points out, is *quezo de bola*. For any other special occasion, she adds, there should be *lechon*.

Presence

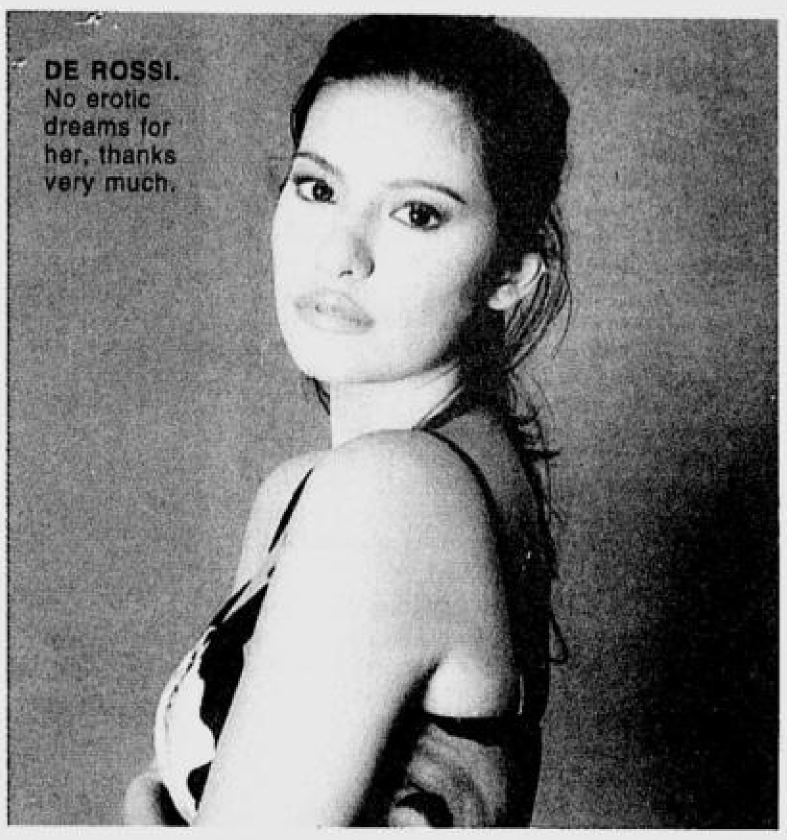
Comedian Earl Ignacio grins in agreement. It doesn't matter to him what kind of *lechon* he's having, its presence completes any celebration.

Turkey is not traditional fare for Filipinos but young actor Wowie de Guzman and singer Ariel Rivera crave for it come Christmastime.

Says Ariel: "I love turkey but I can't eat it everyday, so Christmas is the perfect time to have it. It also reminds me of the Thanksgiving dinner I used to share with my family in Canada."

For "Tubing-Ilog" mainstay Kaye Abad, sweet ham and potato salad are a must during *noche buena*. "*Kapag* New Year *naman*," she adds, "*hindi nawawala ang lugaw at saka tokwa* … *baboy*!"

Bedroom talk with 'Hubog's' Assunta De Rossi



DE ROSSI. No erotic dreams for her, thanks very much.

By Edmund L. Sicam

WHAT do you do when the subject of your interview is yawning every five minutes? This was the situation we faced when we spoke one late evening to Assunta De Rossi, star of "Hubog," Good Harvest Productions' entry to this year's Metro Manila Festival. The sexy actress had not yet gotten over her jet lag after travelling to the US to shoot episodes of her TV gag show "Bubble Gang" and she was tired from all the promo activities the studio had scheduled for her.

Disappointed

We asked her how she felt about her movie being "X-ed" by the MTRCB during its first review. She felt disappointed but didn't really elaborate why. (The day after, a five-man review committee unanimously approved "Hubog" without cuts for adult audiences.) She began to yawn again.

We tried another tack. Instead of focusing on her role in the movie, we asked her about her favorite nocturnal activity—sleep. To our surprise, she perked up and stopped yawning. She said she was the *maantukin* type, which was understandable because of her weekly tapings and movie shoots. It would reach a point where, instead of taking lunch or dinner, she would go to sleep because that was the only time she could rest. Assunta can sleep anywhere, and in whatever position.

When she is in her own bed and even when she's in a hotel room, she can't fall asleep without a pillow to hug, much like Linus and his security blanket. She also doesn't want to sleep alone in bed. In fact, many times, she usually shares her bed with sister Alessandra and their mom.

Wild imagination

The 18-year-old star is afraid to be alone in her room because her imagination runs wild. She worries about monsters being present under her bed so she keeps the lights and TV on. Once, she got scared of her sister's portrait, which seemed to be perpetually gazing at her. She was afraid Alessandra would turn into a vampire. However, when there are people with her, she prefers to switch off the lights. She sleeps better in the dark. But, after she's turned off all the lights, she dashes for the bed and covers herself with the comforter, scared that she might see ghosts.

Assunta dreams a lot. Many times, she dreams about visiting beautiful places she's never seen before. The weird part is that there's always a feeling of dread despite the pleasant surroundings. She has also dreamt about riding a plane, going up an elevator and getting involved in natural disasters. Even in her sleep, the thought of ghosts and goblins enters her subconscious.

Illusion vs reality

She has also had situations while asleep when she doesn't know if she's shooting a movie or experiencing reality. Another time, she dreamt about being lifted up from her bed and enjoying it. "*Ang sarap ng pakiramdam*," she recalls, giggling. "*Para kang dinuduyan. Kaya lang, natakot ako. Gusto ko nang magising kasi baka kaluluwa ko na pala yung lumilipad.*"

How about erotic dreams? No,says Assunta. She's dreamt about being kissed by a handsome guy (she couldn't remember who) but that was it. Later, she admitted she dreamt about making love in her dream but it was a painful experience, like she was being devirginized. "*Ang sakit, talaga*," says Assunta. "*Sa isip ko, lagot ako sa mama ko. Takot akong mabuntis. Takot din akong mag-asawa.*"

Does Assunta sleep in the nude? She says she hasn't tried it because she's never alone in her room. She wears a loose T-shirt and shorts. Maybe if she had her own room, she might go topless but, even with the privacy, she probably would not feel comfortable without a stitch on. That, from someone who has appeared completely nude in her movies!

Uneasiness

We commented that her uneasiness may be a reflection of her own discomfort about shooting sexy scenes. This amateur psychologist told her that she was probably repressing her experience in front of the cameras.

With the interview over, Assunta was looking forward to hugging her favorite pillow and dozing off to dreamland, but the day wasn't over for her—there were more promo activities ahead!

Bite into Washington Apples

Braeburn
This apple's rich, sweet-spicy flavor is high-impact. Color varies from orange to red over a yellow background. Aromatic, juicy and crisp, Braeburns are great for snacking and baking.
Available October-July

Gala
Pinkish-orange stripes over a yellow background are the signature of this crisp, aromatically-sweet apple. Galas have gained popularity among consumers in the past 15 years. Snacking and salads are primary uses.
Available September-June

Granny Smith
Green, extremely tart, crisp, juicy and versatile, they're available year-round. Grannies are a favorite of Washington state pie-bakers. They're also excellent for snacking and salads.
Available year-round

Pink Lady®
Firm crisp flesh and a unique tangy-tart flavor are characteristic of this apple. Snackers and bakers give the variety high marks in consumer tastings. Pink Lady® is the last apple harvested in Washington state in late October. Crisp fall nights bring on the bright pink color that gives the apple its name.
Available November-August

Rome Beauty
Bakers love this round, brilliant red apple. The variety holds its shape well when cooked, and its sweet flavor improves with the heat of the oven. The fruit sometimes has a pink core which can give applesauce a touch of color.
Available October-June

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Available year-round

Cameo®
Sweet with a snappy crunch, Cameo® makes an excellent snack or a tasty dessert. The variety was discovered as a chance seedling in a Washington state orchard in the 1980s. Its skin is red striped over a creamy background.
Available October-August

Red Delicious
This one's a classic - America's favorite snacking apple. The heart-shaped fruit is bright red and sometimes striped. Crunchy with a mildly sweet flavor, Reds are also great in salads. Washington apple growers have been producing the world's best Red Delicious apples since the 1920s.
Available year-round

Jonagold
This orange-tinted apple has a tangy-sweet flavor. It's excellent for fresh eating and cooking. Washington's warm dry summer and cool fall ensure that the delicate flavor develops fully for September harvest.
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Cinemanila filmfest extended

By Rito P. Asilo

EAKARAT Sarsukh in "Jan Dara."

THE SECOND week of Cinemanila's screenings was more orderly and gave the beleaguered film buff a sense of acceptance that, despite time management and a genuine zest to watch as many films as possible, the staggering number of films was just too many to see in so short a time. He just had to choose and hope that the film he chose was the right one for his taste.

But who's complaining? We certainly aren't.

Welcome news

It certainly was welcome news when it was announced that the screening of the award winners and the more popular entries would follow after the official end of the festival, and would run until before the annual Metro Manila Film Festival entries would take over Metro Manila screens. What, another festival?!

In last week's article, we mentioned how much we enjoyed the simplicity of Japan's "Firefly Dreams;" the gloss and dark humor of New Zealand's "The Price of Milk;" the picture-perfect fairytale revisiting of Korea's "Chunhyang;" the honesty of "Disoriented;" the irreverence and ironic wit of "The Foul King" and the variety of the mostly lightweight shorts of "Erotic Tales 1."

The following week was an even more head-spinning experience. The filmgoer was on constant wait-and-see mode if a scheduled film would *really* be screened, or if it would merit the MTRCB's dreaded X-rating, like what happened to "I.D."

But if we constantly fear the MTRCB's dreaded axe, perhaps it may be a consolation to know that ours is a more liberal group than, say, Thailand's.

Nonzee Nimibutr, widely regarded as the "Modernist of Thai Cinema," who directed ground-breaking milestones in Thai film history by creating films that broke box-office records and attracting Thai audiences back to the cinema through his edgy, violent, sexual and dark morality tales, revealed after the first screening of "Jan Dara" that the version screened at the festival was complete.

Short version

He said that the local Thai version had nine scenes shortened or deleted. When asked which scenes these were, he said, "I have no idea. I didn't watch the short version."

It is a pity that the Filipino film buff will never be able to watch good films hindered by controversial themes, issues of violence, nudity or a combination of these—like, to name a few, Martin Scorsese's "The Last Temptation of Christ," which showed Jesus Christ torn between divine destiny and an all too human awareness of pain and sexuality; Peter Greenaway's "The Baby of Macon," an elaborate assault on superstition and religion, or his "The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover," a study on passion with a horrid scene of cannibalism (which shocked us long before the same concept was introduced in Carlitos Siguion Reyna's "Azucena") or any of Pedro Almodovar's early films filled with kitsch and flavor.

Even Danny Boyle's shocking study of Edinburgh's heroin culture, "Trainspotting," which starred Ewan McGregor, couldn't be shown here without cuts! But, ironically, Greenaway's full frontal nudity-filled "The Pillow Book," which also starred McGregor, was released in commercial outlets—and almost nobody noticed it!

This is not to say that there is nothing in Cinemanila's line-up that shows disturbing, or even gory scenes. Korea's "The Isle," for one, uses physical pain to elicit a clear reaction from its audience. Nimibutr's "Jan Dara," with its strong sexual theme and images, is another.

Among the impressive ones we have seen in the filmfest were Korean and Thai films. Ko-

CINEMANILA/p.C6

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Felicitous fusion of Filipino and American sensibilities in Unitel's 'American Adobo'

By Nestor U. Torre

FILIPINO movies continue to do well abroad. The latest success story is Unitel's "American Adobo," which recently garnered favorable reviews in the States. It will be shown in Manila early next year.

Psychic reinforcement

Laurice Guillen shot the film last year in New York City. Vincent Nebrida's script is about some Filipino friends in the Big Apple who meet regularly for some hearty helpings of adobo and psychic reinforcement.

The friends are Mike Manalastas, a former activist who is now a news editor; Marissa Tuazon, a socialite who puts up with her American boyfriend's infidelity; Ray Arboleda, a handsome young man who attracts mainly non-Filipino women; Tere Sanchez, an accountant who looks for love in all the wrong places; and Gerry Payawal, a closet gay whose boyfriend is dying of AIDS.

These characters are played by Christopher de Leon, Dina Bonnevie, Paolo Montalban, Cherry Pie Picache and Ricky Davao, respectively. Quite a top-rate stellar cast, you'll agree.

Dinner

The film starts with Tere hosting a dinner for a visiting friend, Lorna (Sol Oca), to which Mike, Marissa and Gerry and Marissa's cousin Raul are invited. In the course of the party chatter, things take a more serious turn and Mike reveals that he's unhappy not just about his job but also about his wife (Susan Valdez), and would like to go back to the Philippines.

The expatriates have their own complaints, but Lorna is dazzled by the American Dream, and would gladly drop everything in Manila just to live permanently in New York.

BONNEVIE. Plays a socialite who puts up with her American boyfriend's infidelity.

Resentments

Much later, the group gathers again at Mike's home, and simmering anger and resentments break loose. The aftermath: Mike does return to the Philippines. Gerry finally addresses his identity crisis. Tere finds love with a fireman. As for Gerry, he finally comes to terms with his sexuality—a difficult thing for him to do because of Filipino culture's iron-clad rules for a male child.

Aside from its involving storyline and empathetic characters, "American Adobo" is instructive because it shows how Fil-American movies should be shot in the States—not on the sly (as has been the case with many productions), but on a professional level, with all the required production planning, shooting permits, small but complete production crew, etc.

It also helps a lot that one of the movie's American producers, Kevin Foxe, was involved in that big indie hit, "The Blair Witch Project."

Connections

With his connections in New York and Hollywood, Foxe has made it possible for "American Adobo" to get wider distribution in the States, as well as to interest name Asian-American talents like Paolo Montalban to play key roles in the movie, adding further to its audience appeal even among non-Filipinos in the United States.

Finally, it's interesting that, to fully realize this movie, its US-based producers had to "import" stars like Dina Bonnevie, Christopher de Leon, Ricky Davao and Cherry Pie Picache, and director Laurice Guillen.

The stars have been brought in not just to appeal to Fil-American viewers, but also to make sure that the production's "performance level" is high. There are good Fil-Am actors in the States, but not enough to tackle such complex roles as this movie has.

Screen acting

True, there are some gifted Filipino actors in US theater, and some of them have even won awards, but stage performance is different from screen acting, so the production is really better off with its Manila-bsed actors.

As for director Guillen, she had to step into the project after the original, US-based director didn't pan out, but the change has turned out to be in the movie's favor.

The combination of a Philippine-based director like Guillen and the movie's Fil-Am producers, writer and shooting crew has resulted in a felicitous fusion of Filipino and American sensibilities that effectively vivifies the twin cultural thrusts and conundrums of the film itself.

"American Adobo" will open both in the States and in the Philippines next month.

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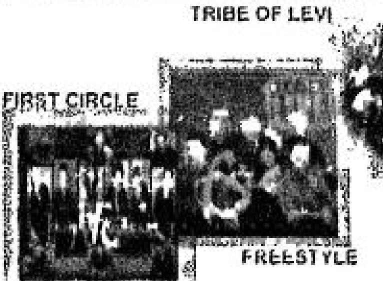


Cinemanila

(From page C5)

rean films featured interesting stories presented in a clear narrative, made more engaging by equally strong performances and touching or troubling visual execution.

Backdrop

Kim Ki Duk's "The Isle" is about an island, where people travel to fish or to satisfy their sexual desires, and about the people drawn to it. Using the backdrop of the fall season, the island calmly holds its terrifying secrets in the bosom of its serene seas, amidst various pastel-colored wooden huts built directly on the water. It follows the undefineable link of a young local woman and an ex-policeman who carries the murder of his lover on his conscience. *(To be concluded)*

AM/FM

Wholesome fun with Chico and Delamar

By Rito P. Asilo

CHICO and Delamar's "Rush Hour" (93.9 mHz, Mondays to Fridays from 6 to 9 a.m.) is dwKC's sure bet to start its listeners' day right and bright.

For months now, we have been checking out the fun duo's radio show on the FM frequency. And they have always managed to give their listeners time to relax and have a good time.

Chemistry

The show's popularity, as well as Chico's and Delamar's, among radio enthusiasts doesn't surprise us. The chemistry is obvious. Chico's serious-guy persona complements Delamar's schoolgirl-like charm, a combination made more appealing by their honest, sometimes dark, cynical musings on love (or, as they constantly complain, the lack of it), and their obvious respect for each other.

The result is a rip-roaring battle of wits, and a showcase of honest-to-goodness entertainment and variety not heard in many radio shows on FM. When they're together, they just have fun, let their hair down and have a great time doing it. We love listening to them laugh and giggle on air because of their respective voices' infectious timber.

Two versions

Among the features of "Rush Hour" that keep its listeners glued to their walkmans and radio sets are "Like A Version," where two versions of a song are played consecutively, like Michael Jackson's and Alien Ant Farm's "Smooth Criminal;" Aha's and A1's "Take on Me;" Cyndi Lauper's and Phil Collins' "True Colors;" Westlife's and Billy Joel's "Uptown Girl" and even OPM staples like Basil Valdez's and Regine Velasquez's "Tuwing Umuulan at Kapiling Ka." They then discuss, along with their listeners, which version is better.

The show also features the station's most requested songs. And you actually hear the hosts root for their personal favorites—for example, Plus One's "Last Flight Out" or Binocular's "Deep."

We got copies of the duo's recordings (Polygram's "...Talk About Love" and "Come Rain, Come Shine") and listened to them. It was a surprise for us to find them enjoyable. The records contained the funniest of the two hosts repartee, with songs conveniently distributed between these recorded conversations. It even contained their biggest bloopers.

Second album

For star-struck listeners, the second album contained interviews with Martin Nievera, Ogie Alcasid, Dingdong Avanzado, Nanette Inventor and the very smart Edu Manzano. If these were not enough, Chico and Delamar recorded a couple of songs (yes, they sang!) and acquitted themselves well, despite their obvious vocal limitations. And it was a smart move to get the prolific Trina Belamide to produce some of the tracks in the album.

Another portion was "Out of Nowhere," where they played good but long-forgotten songs from great artists, like "I Want You to Want Me," a tune one of them called "a stalker's song."

They also featured topics that their listeners gave their opinions on, compiled these and chose the "Top Ten" (usually top fifteen) answers, which were alternately funny, sad, crazy and out-of-this-world.

In a recent show, the "Top Ten" feature was: "Meanest thing you've done, and meanest thing done to you." And the answers were hilarious—while some of them were plain mean!

Pet duck

Samples: "After an hour of running after our pet duck, my brother punched it, and it died." "I set my cat on fire." "My boss fired me and gave the job to someone prettier to boost the company's real estate sales, but the opposite happened, and our stocks plummeted."

CHICO AND DELAMAR. Musings on love—or the lack of it.

"My brother was going to visit me so I cooked my pet chicken, Henhen, to make *tinola* for him." "I called our university president 'stupid' in front of DECS officials. He kicked me out of school, I rallied for two months and got back in."

A few days ago, the "Top Ten" was about "ways to keep awake during *Simbang Gabi*." Some of the answers: "Step on your ingrown toenails;" "Let your fat brother sit on your hand." "*Bilangin ang* split-ends *ng taong naka-upo sa harap mo*." "Imagine that the guy seated next to you is a rapist." "When nobody's looking, make faces at the kid seated in front of you" or "*Sumigaw ng* 'Bank!' (a la "Weakest Link") *tuwing* responsorial psalm."

A couple of months ago, we remembered a similarly interesting, but more serious, topic: "Things that you don't like about yourself." The answers were honest and revealing, even those from the hosts themselves: "I always sabotage my friend's endeavors so that she doesn't become as successful as I am." "I enjoy manipulating people's lives." "I secretly list down noisy people's names and give the list to my teachers."

If we got hilarious, outrageous answers in most of "Rush Hour's" "Top Ten" portions, the show's "Dear Chics and Del" was where we get the drama.

Battered wife

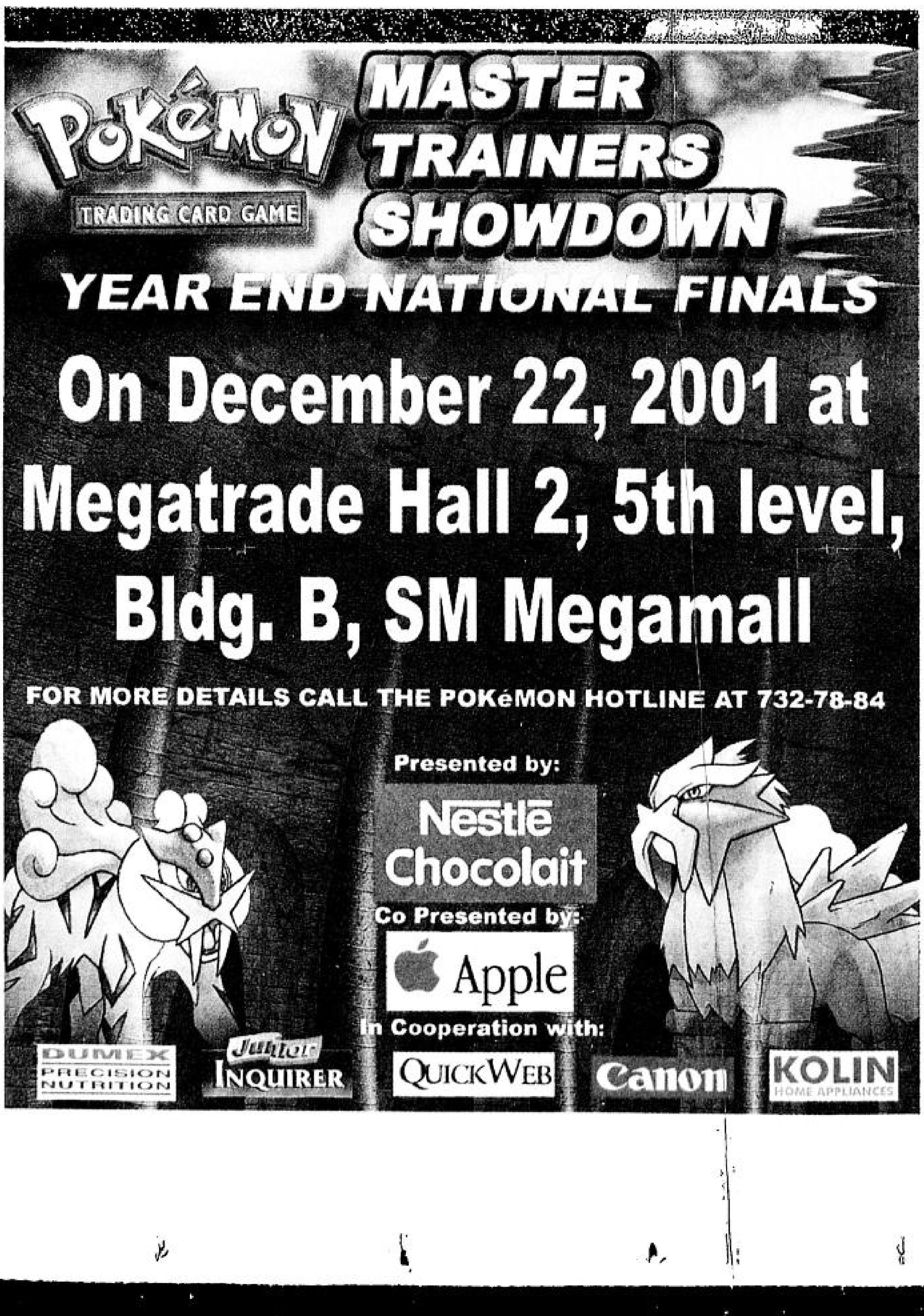
In past shows, some of the real-life stories we heard were that of a battered wife who couldn't leave her husband because she still hoped to change him; a guy who has a girlfriend for three months, has a six-year relationship with another guy; the battered girlfriend of a lesbian who felt she was falling for another woman (an honest-to-goodness three-way!); the younger boyfriend of a woman got a call—*live, and on the air*—from her to assure him that she was not ashamed to let the whole world know that she was in love with him despite their age gap, and the boy got embarrassed about sharing their story with so many people, etc.

A couple of days ago, the story was even weirder than the usual sob story: A girl who was in relationship with a guy confessed that she was in love with a childhood friend who also had a girlfriend. The catch was, this particular friend was "slightly" gay—he once left a girlfriend he had a date with to be with another guy! Uh-oh!

For the tragic stories, the answers seemed simple, but not easy. And the advice that Chico and Delamar dished were sensible and logical.

(On a personal note, we would like to congratulate a good friend, Dr. Girlie Mangadap of PGH and UST, for recently graduating and completing her Family Medicine residency.)

To all our readers, Merry Christmas! Have a Happy, Peaceful and Blessed Holiday!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Field of dreams, of golf and greens

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

SOME mornings you wake up differently. Today is the day you pack your bags, dump them in the car and drive away. Maybe for a round of golf, who knows? You just feel like going.

Had enough of the big city? Perhaps you know it will always be there. Smog capital and high-rise hotbeds of big-league stress, and tension. Big-ticket people and glitzy social rituals. But you don't need to be there all the time.

It is one of the best-known secrets of golfers and their families. Located an hour away from Manila, the Riviera Golf and Country Club is a 300-hectare real estate development that is 1,000 feet above sea level with a refreshing climate and gentle winds all year round.

Golfer's paradise

The Riviera Golf Club is over 140 hectares of two premium golf courses designed by international golf pros, Fred Couples and Bernard Langer, a driving range, and a clubhouse with excellent facilities.

The Couples course is typically American—large fairways and greens. The Langer course is European, tighter spaces requiring more pinpoint accuracy. The Riviera's rolling terrain and lush vegetation together with strategically located sand traps, ravines and water hazards make the fairways picturesque and challenging.

Pamper the palate, why not? The gourmet food served in the golf clubhouse is renowned. Bert Farmadico has a 12-inch chef's hat. In chef language, that's really top hat. He has gone the route of prestige restaurants and hotels including trips abroad to earn the inches on his cap.

Weekends

On weekends, the Golf Club has its sumptuous buffet, consisting of Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Filipino dishes, as well as a pasta corner where choices of pasta and sauces allow one to experiment and be creative. Its 15-page ala carte menu lists a wide variety of choices that makes selecting difficult. Its selection of cakes and pastries should not be missed, as the Riviera's very own chef bakes them.

The golf clubhouse also has a retail shop that features top-of-the-line golfing paraphernalia. The air-conditioned locker rooms include a spa and a corner for aromatheraphy and massage. Thanks to the world-class management team headed by John Blanch, the Riviera is one of the top golf links in the Philippines. It has become a celebrated tournament site—it has hosted the Philippine Open twice and the first President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo Alay sa Kawal Cup.

On the other side of the Riviera property, the country club features a pitch a putt Par 3 Executive Course and mini-clubhouse.

More than golf

But life is more than golf, so at the country club area, there's a free-form pool with a giant slide that is just irresistible. Underneath is a snack bar right in the pool area!

A few meters away is the lap pool. Walk a bit to the Ridge Café situated on an elevated spot overlooking the Kabag waterfalls. Past the Ridge kiosk are two tennis courts, one has shell and the other a hard court surface. A little farther is the beach volleyball court.

A visit will relax you, do you good and even convince you that the Riviera is the idyllic paradise you have promised yourself and your family on weekends or on free times. Why not gift yourself this Christmas? Call 912-4724.

FRANCISCO Paredes (left, standing), RSBS president; Amelia H.C. Ylagan, chief finance officer; Honorio S. Azcueta, EVP operations and RSBS president Cesar M. Jayme (seated).

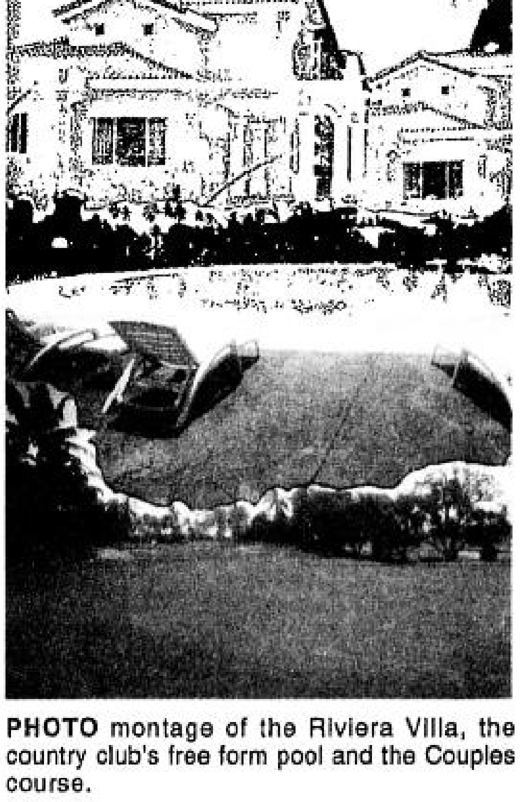


PHOTO montage of the Riviera Villa, the country club's free form pool and the Couples course.

Uro de la Cruz doesn't need blood and gore to scare moviegoers

By Edmund L. Sicam

IT'S that time of the year again… when, the morning (or for a lot, the afternoon) after a filling *noche buena* and an exciting opening of gifts, people troop to the mall not to shop. but to watch movies at the Metro Manila Film Festival. It's the annual tradition of showcasing Filipino talents in films. This year, Regal Entertainment's official entry is in the same vein as its wildly popular "Shake, Rattle and Roll" horror-comedy tradition.

The movie is called "Bahay Ni Lola" and stars a combination of veteran actors- Gloria Romero, Gina Alajar, Manilyn Reynes, Aiza Seguerra, and newcomers—Isabella, Maxene Magalona, James Blanco, Maybelyn and Miko Sotto. Plus the element of comedy in Allan K; to ease up on the horror a bit.

At the helm of this film is director Uro de la Cruz, who also wrote the script. Did he cut down on the blood and gore on purpose, just to get a G rating for the MMFF entry? Direk Uro points out that you don't always need blood and gore to scare moviegoers.

Evil forces

He shares a little bit about the story of 'Bahay ni Lola' - "*Yung lola* has been planning to protect the house from all these spirits *na kumakapit*, but then she dies. *Akala nila* (the rest of the cast), *nagmumulto yung lola sa bahay*. Then, near the end, she comes out and says, *teka, hindi ako yan*… You have to protect your house. It's when they decide to do that that the problems get resolved."

Besides the story, another element this movie boasts of is its special effects. One is the creation of the main villain of the story, the evil mist. Says Direk Uro: "*Mahirap talaga gawin ang isang bagay na sa* imagination *lang nag-e*-exist. A cloudlike thing *na nagbabago ng korte at itsura* at the same time, it should come out really scary."

Another challenge was making Gloria Romero the ghostly matriarch who guards her house long after her death. There's even a scene where the ghostly Gloria Romero walks on the ceiling.

DE LA CRUZ. No stranger to special effects.

Direk Uro is no stranger to special effects, having learned different techniques on the job. "A long time ago, I was doing a show for "Bad Bananas." They wanted gags *na gumagamit ng* special effects, like slow motion, and I would deal with that. *Doon nagsimula… si* Jay Ilagan *yung humaharap sa mga* challenge na ganyan, like I'll be a Jay Ilagan *na malaki* talking to a Jay Ilagan *na maliit… Simpleng* matting *na yan*, and using the blue screen.

"You have to have actors who are willing to be challenged. Plus, the actor has to be creative… he must be able to visualize doing these things, like talking to a smaller version of yourself… *hindi lang basta-basta yan*. You have to be able to visualize what you're doing and say the lines you're supposed to say… *Magaling talaga diyan si* Michael V. you can actually have a show na si Michael V lang ang artista. 12 roles, all at the same time, in one scene, *kaya niya*.

Expensive technology

"*Ang malungkot lang*, although I am familiar with the technology and I know how to do it, *pagdating sa pelikula* I cannot do it because it's going to be very expensive. *Sa* video, *madali gawin…ang mahal yung pag*-transfer from video to film… but it's all possible. In the States, mura lang yung process. *Dito*, commercials *lang ang gumagamit niyan*. Go to Hongkong, Australia… *kaya ang nangyayari, mas maganda ang* production value *ng mga* commercials *natin kaysa sa* TV shows. "I used to do commercials—*iba talaga… iba ang* culture… Hollywood. *Tapos, pagdating mo dito, pito-pito…*"

"The trick is not to have five minutes *na tuloy tuloy ang* special effects… *kapiraso lang*, but think that the special effects last the whole time…"

Direk Uro hasn't completely said goodbye to sex films just because he's directing horror flicks for Regal and TV shows like "Bubble Gang"… "Actually, next year, I may have another sex film," he says.

Uro has an interesting take on the sex film industry as well: "Sex films will always make money because they're what you don't get for free on TV. Once we show sex on TV, *tapos na ang* bold films. For example, Assunta di Rossi… you see her everyday on TV. *Libre yun*, so, why will we watch Assunta again? Because she'll be showing her breasts *sa pelikula*. But if you're going to show Assunta doing what she was doing sa 'Bubble Gang' *na nagpapatawa*, without showing anything, they will not go."

"But, in most festivals abroad, they don't care about the sex elements that they bring out… storytelling *talaga*. When I join festivals like that, I edit out the sex scenes and retain the story, *kasi yun talaga yung hinahabol nila*. Before *kasi*, the thinking was, show the sanitized version locally. Then you have the imported version, with all the sex. No, it's the other way around."

Holiday wishes for Metro filmfest participants

By Ricky T. Gallardo

INSTEAD of our yearly fearless predictions for the coming filmfest awards, we've decided to change things a bit and just hand out our wishes for the participants whose films are competing in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival:

Armando Goyena—a Best Actor award for his felt performance in "Yamashita." We're sure Cesar Montano wouldn't complain if Goyena beats him for the plum.

Assunta and Alessandra de Rossi—a double acting trophy for their compelling work in "Hubog." These sisters certainly have 'it.'

Mikey Macapagal Arroyo—May the curse that has beset movies (emerging as box-office tail-enders, that is) starring presidential children end with him this year.

Producers Margie Moran and Niña Romualdez—box-office success for their initial venture so that the people who have inspired them to do "Bagong Buwan" can benefit from their movie's earnings, too.

Joel Lamangan—a citation for effective handling of his actors in "Hubog," and a movie without his favorite Jim Pebangco in an important role.

Supporting cast of "Bagong Buwan"—a special ensemble acting award that is so well-deserved by the group of **Caridad Sanchez, Amy Austria, Nonie Buencamino, Carlo Aquino, Jericho Rosales, Jiro Manio, Jody Santamaria and Ronnie Lazaro**.

Chito Roño—a commendation for being able to create a good film with mostly non-star actors in the cast of "Yamashita."

Raymund Bagatsing and Ana Capri—bigger roles that do not insult their talent, unlike the ones they have in "Di Kita Ma-reach."

Marilou Diaz Abaya—a movie without Cesar Montano, Jhong Hilario and musical director Nonong Buencamino. There's a vast well of other gifted actors and technical experts around to tap.

Willy Cruz—a well-earned film score trophy for his intelligent music in "Tatarin."

Bojo Molina—a serious acting vehicle that would make people take this good actor seriously.

Wendell Ramos—more important roles like the one he has in "Hubog."

Roadrunner Productions—a special effects hall-of-fame award for consistent five-star work like the one they did in "Yamashita."

Filmfest jurors—an ordinance to limit the nominees only to the truly deserving (unlike in the past where all the lead actors earned nominations), the wisdom to discern good from mediocre work and the objectivity to judge a piece of work apart from the hype about it.

Brilliant acting in 'Closer'

Actor's Actors Inc's resident director, Bart Guingona, did a good job in being able to ascertain that the best assets of "Closer," the wonderful contemporary adult play about partner-switching, were its four lead actors: Ana Abad Santos-Bitong, Lee Robin Salazar, Pinky Amador and Guingona himself. He was successful in simplifying the complex situations the four characters found themselves in, resulting in the controlled and logical flow of this well-written play.

Bitong shone with effortless grace as she took on the emotional roller-coaster ride of her character, Alice Heirs. Amador was consistent, Salazar was both powerful and vulnerable, and Guingona was compelling.

'Regine at the Movies' could've been a good show

No doubt about Regine Velasquez's range as a singer, specially those high notes she has learned to hit with ease. But when we caught her recently at the OnStage Theatre in Makati, we thought that aside from relying on her lung power alone, she should have paid more serious attention to the musical arrangements of the songs she included in her repertoire.

Her choice of her brother-in-law Raul Mitra as musical director and arranger has been met with criticism since her detractors have observed that Mitra is still too raw and inexperienced to be given such big responsibilities. But Velasquez must've thought otherwise and she insisted on including Mitra in her package, thus causing the major flaw of the show.

Another point: When Velasquez sings, she's five-star. But the moment she talks spontaneously to her audience, she loses her charm. Her best number in the show was the "Moulin Rouge" segment, where her spiels were memorized.

A friend told us to count how many times Velasquez said "Gosh!" Throughout the show, we counted 19. And do you know how many times she uttered the expression, '*Ang Garul?* Eleven. We could only utter, "My Gosh!"

B-day girl Lorna T in hiatus

First rate actress Lorna Tolentino hasn't been very visible after her husband's stunning loss during the last elections. Tomorrow, Dec. 23, Lorna celebrates her birthday and we wish that she can make an auspicious comeback in the acting arena next year.

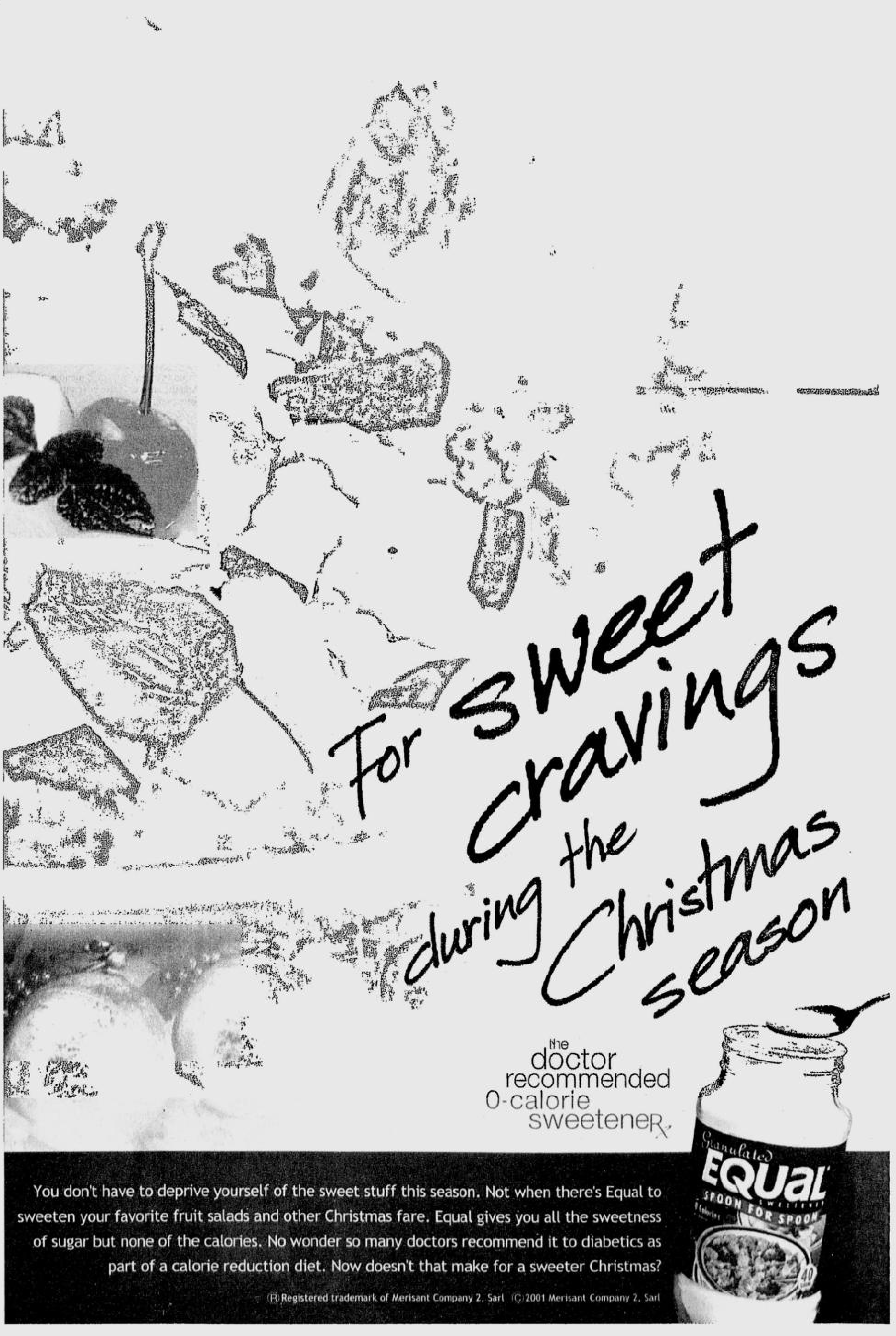
There's no shame in her husband's failed attempt at the QC mayoralty post, certainly not for a survivor like Lorna, who's got a big, big heart to boot. Happy Birthday!

Getting to know Nonzee Nimibutr

At the Mayor's Night of the CineManila filmfest, we met one of Thailand's promising directors, Nonzee Nimibutr.

He was in town because some of his films were being shown at the event, including the controversial "Jan Dara." The film tells the story of a young man's passage into adulthoold. He fights his personal demons in an environment of obsession while coming to grips with the three women in his life.

The film is controversial and eight of its sexy scenes were deleted by the censors in Bangkok. "I'm very happy that it has been approved without cuts here in Manila," Nimibutr smiled.



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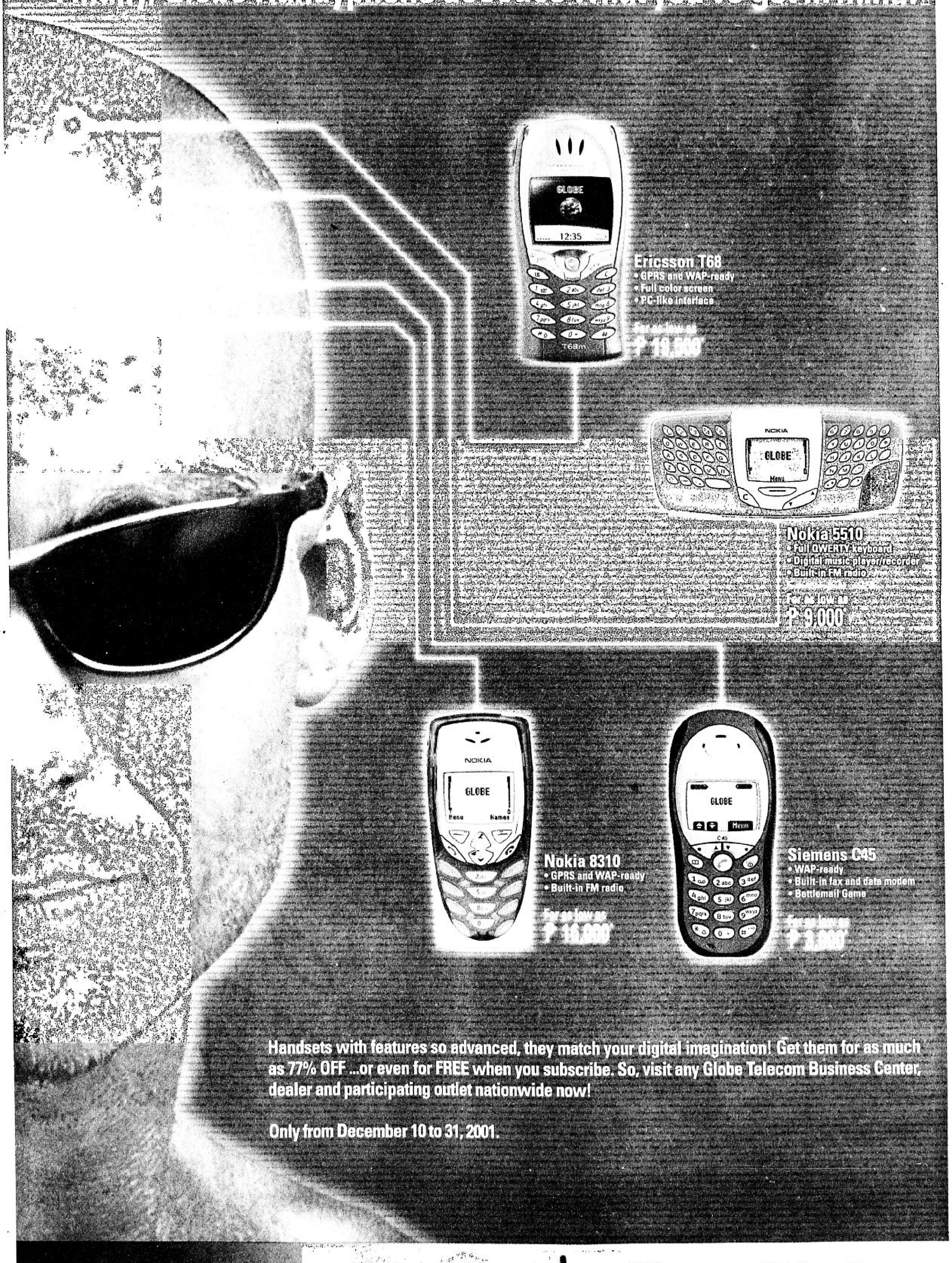

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Treat of the Week

Nestlé Cream

Fruity Cream Dip

1 170g. can NESTLÉ CREAM
2/3 cup chopped red apple
1/4 cup chopped pineapple, well drained
1/2 tsp. curry powder
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup grated cheddar cheese

Combine NESTLÉ CREAM with the rest of the ingredients in a blender. Chill. Serve as a dip for slices of fresh fruits.

Watch out for next week's fruity treat!

GUILLEN. There's hope for the Filipino movie industry.

Laurice Guillen takes on new role as president of FDFPI

By Andy Bais

AFTER the commercial and critical success of her film "Tanging Yaman" last year, director Laurice Guillen's followers were eagerly awaiting her follow-up project. Everyone thought that the multi-awarded director could come up with at least one movie this year.

She did finish one, "American Adobo," shot entirely in the States, no less. But, sad to say, this won't be shown until January 2002.

Different role

However, in May this year, without much fanfare, Laurice took on a different role far bigger than her job as film director. She has become the president of the Film Development Foundation of the Philippines, Inc., the first to come from the ranks of film workers. Her two predecessors, Dr. Cirio Santiago and Marichu Vera-Perez, were movie producers. The FDFPI's new chairman is Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera.

Specifically, Laurice, together with board members, are tasked towards achieving FDFPI's twin objectives: to raise the artistic and technical quality of the Filipino film, and to generate among its audiences a clear understanding and appreciation of our identity as a people, with a history and culture truly our own.

Laurice admits that the local film industry is not in tip-top shape. Some industry observers say that it is dying. But Laurice believes that there is still hope for the industry.

Opportunity

Laurice says she accepted the job because it is an opportunity for her to do whatever she can to help the movie industry. "*Parang* it gave me an official personality to put my ideas to good use, in general—and specifically, for the development of the industry at this point in time," she adds.

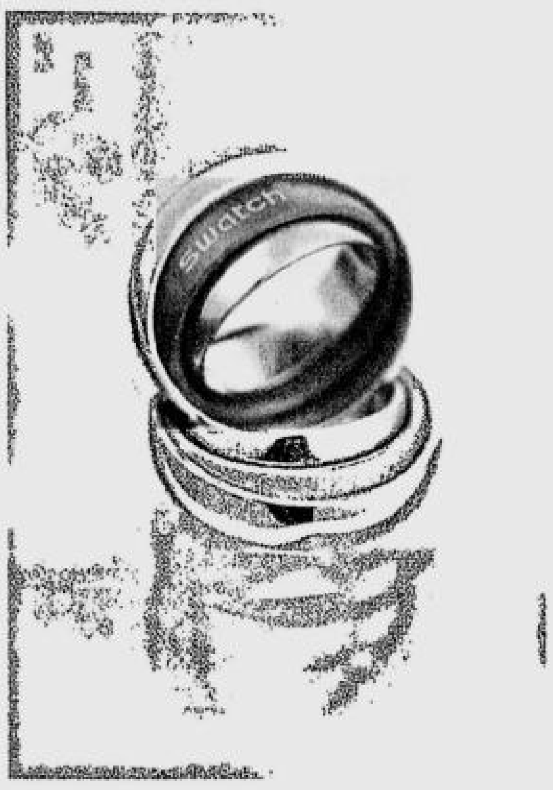
For Laurice, her new-found role is a challenge. "For many years, when I was still active in the directors' guild under the FAP, the grumblings of the film workers had always been that the leadership usually went to the producers. So I thought, this is one opportunity for a film worker like myself to be in this place. This will enable me to try out the things that are lacking in the industry because of the official personality that I received," she explains.

What are her immediate plans for the movie industry under her stewardship of the FDFPI? Laurice points out that since the formation of FDFPI, it has had, as one of its major functions, the operation of the Film Ratings Board, which evaluates films and rates them according to their artistic merits and content. The FPFPI has also been handling the Film Scriptwriting Workshops and the annual Film Screenwriting Contest that have proven to be very successful, and they will be continued.

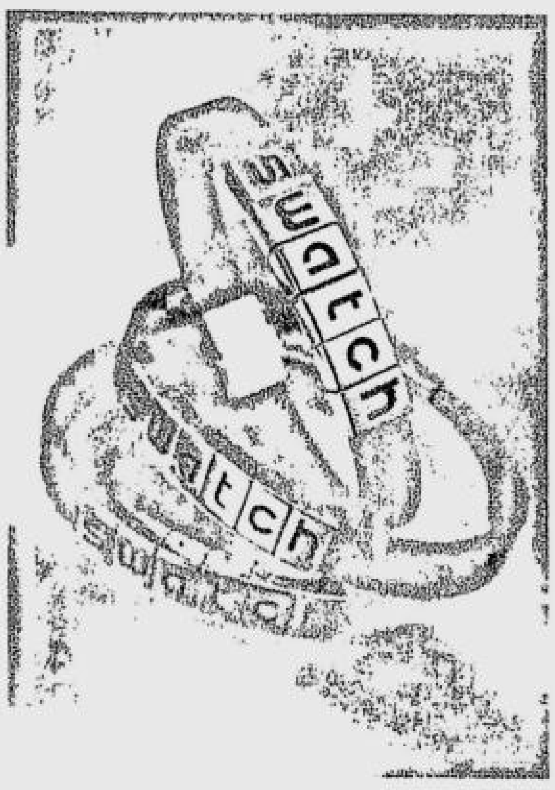
Incentive package

Laurice, however, plans to propose to the board the revision of the incentive package for filmmakers to encourage them to make better films. In line with this, she would like to revive the Film

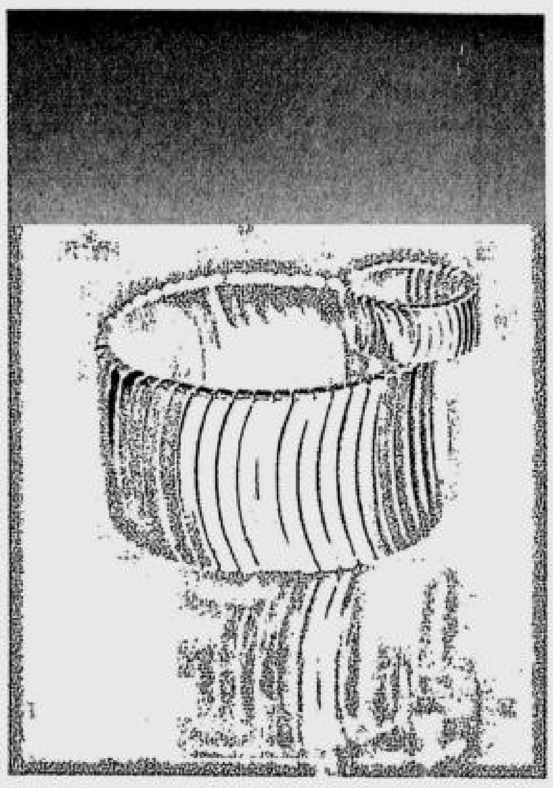
LAURICE/p.D2



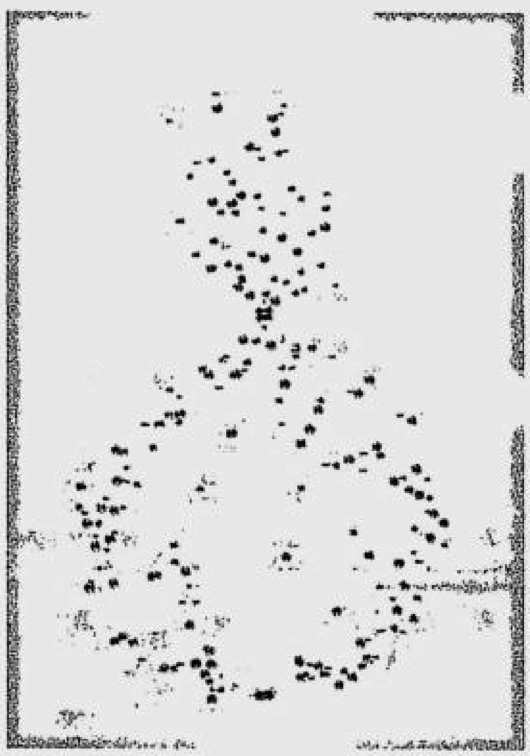
Is that one ring or three?
A combination of steel and aluminum rings.



How wonderful! A bracelet made of silicon and individual steel blocks.

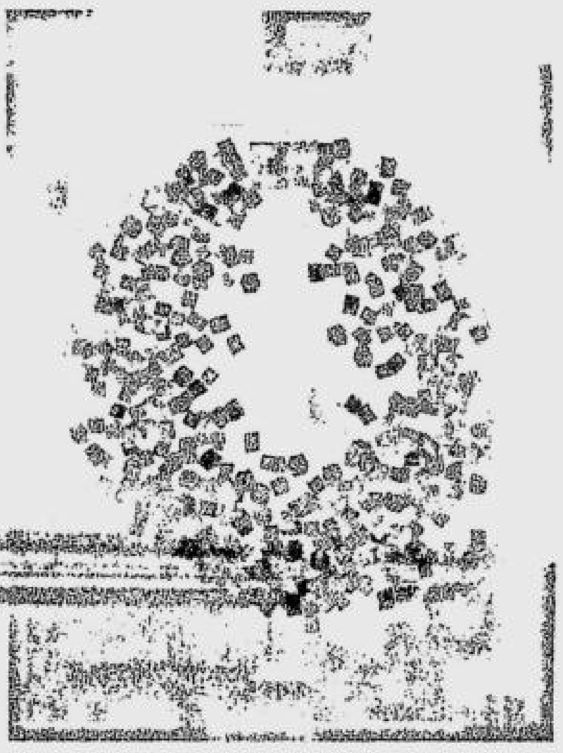


Play on reflections with this bracelet and ring made of polished steel.

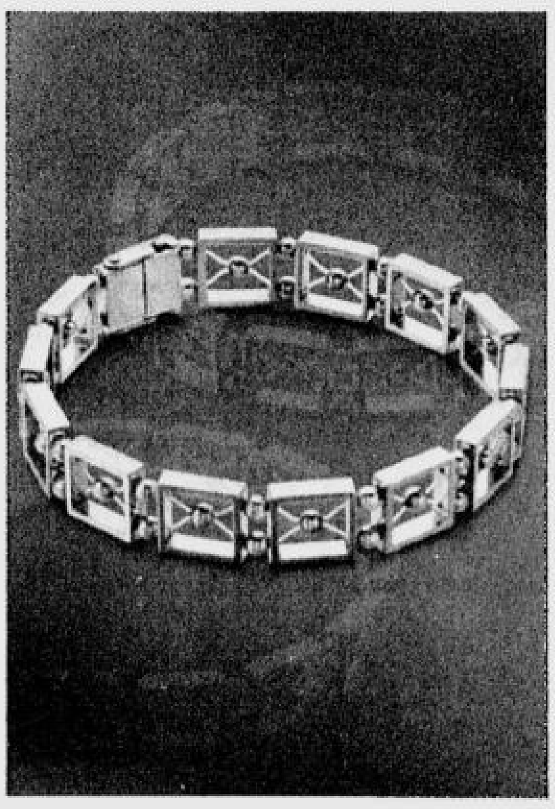


A silicon necklace you can assemble and take apart any way you want.

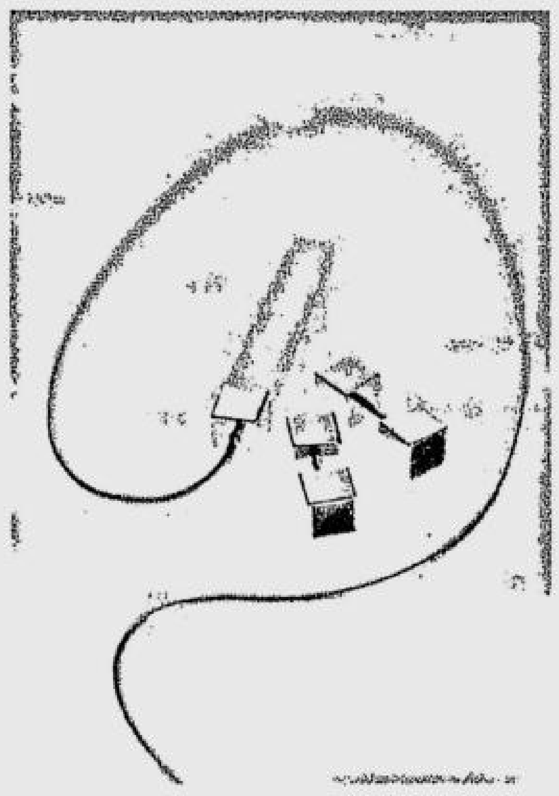
swatch+ bijoux



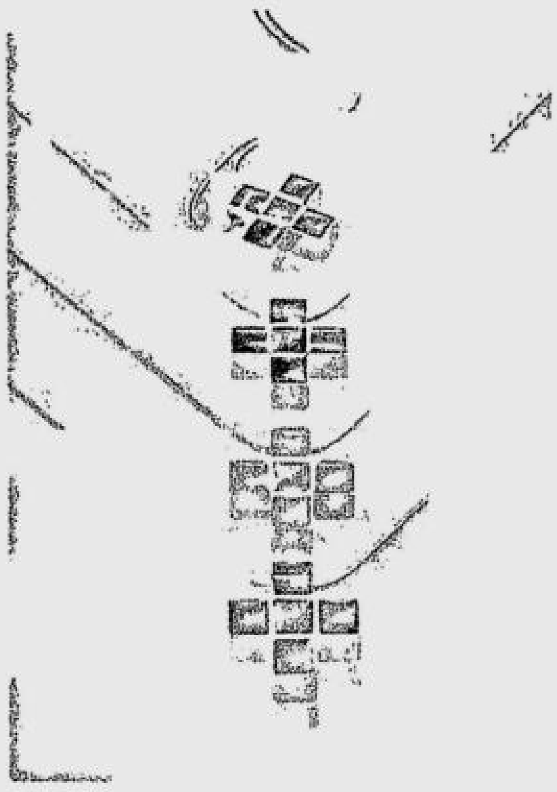
The first "body candy" offered by Swatch.
It comes in pastel colors.



The small steel spheres in this bracelet seem to float in the air!



Brillantly colorful silicon, dramatically designed.



Silicon: the material which best adapts to unusual shapes and bright colors.

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Get a chance to win half a million pesos on December 26 and a whopping 1 million pesos on January 2, 2002!
See flyers for complete mechanics.

Friendly competition for young artists

THE FIRST Art for Peace tilt for young artists will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. today at the Orosa Atrium of Robinsons Place, Manila. The friendly competition is supported by Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr., National Bookstore, Robinsons Place, Manila, Brushes and Strokes, and Phil. Pastries, Inc.

Art for Peace aims to dissolve the differences that cause people to disagree. Child artists are invited to draw or paint their dreams of peace. All materials will be provided.

There will be two categories—Category 1 for children 6 to 10 years old, and Category 2 for ages 10 to 15. All prospective contestants should finish registering at the registration desk before the tilt starts at 11 a.m. Only one entry per contestant will be accepted.

Winners will be announced at 3:30 p.m. Prizes: Category 1—First, P10,000; second, P7,500; third, P5,000. Category 2—First, P15,000; second, P12,500; third, P10,000.

'The Christmas Box'

The made-for-TV family movie, "Christmas Box," will be telecast on the Hallmark Channel at 9 p.m. on Dec. 23 (Sunday). The film stars Richard Thomas, Maureen O'Hara and Annette O'Toole.

It tells the heartwarming story of a family that is granted the best Christmas gift to cherish for the rest of their lives.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Paul and Keri Evans live in cramped quarters with their daughter Jenna. Happily, an old woman, Mary, invites them to move in with her shortly before Christmas.

They become close and Mary is troubled by Paul's growing estrangement from his family, so she tries to do something about it. For his part, Paul discovers secrets about Mary's past that teach him the true meaning of Christmas.

The Hallmark Channel is seen on Home Cable's Channel 25, Sky Cable 38 and Destiny Cable's Channel 25.

Segment host

Ju.D Lao, the Fruitcake Lady, has a new feather on her cap: she's a segment host on the Taiwan-based cooking show, "Modern Vegetarian Cooking." The program airs on Sky Cable's Channel 47 and Home Cable's Channel 63, and on the Da-ai station of the Tzuchi Foundation. It is also broadcast in the United States, Europe and the Middle East.

Lao's niche is western vegetarian dishes, and she uses local products like Filipino saffron and *achuete*. Viewers abroad have called her to ask about the curly and bow-shaped pastas she brings in from the Philippines.

She is known as the Fruitcake Lady because of her high-end fruitcakes, which have become popular not only here but also in some parts of Taiwan, Singapore, India, Belgium, Germany and the United States. Call 633-0260.

Lao will resume taping for "Modern Vegetarian Cooking" in January, focusing this time on pastries and breads. The program's new shows will be seen here from Monday to Saturday at 4 p.m.

Hyatt's Misa de Gallo specials

To make the holiday season special, Hyatt Regency Manila features these ongoing Christmas activities until Dec. 24:

Tenor Nolyn Cabahug sings at 6 p.m. at the hotel's famous Calesa Music Bar and Lounge.

"A Choral Celebration," spotlighting the University of the East Chorale in performance at 7 p.m. at the hotel's lobby.

Plus a feast of favorite local Christmastime delicacies at the breakfast table (5 to 10 a.m.) at Café Al Fresco—*bibingka, puto bumbong, salabat* tea, etc., available on the buffet or ala carte.

'Batang West Side'

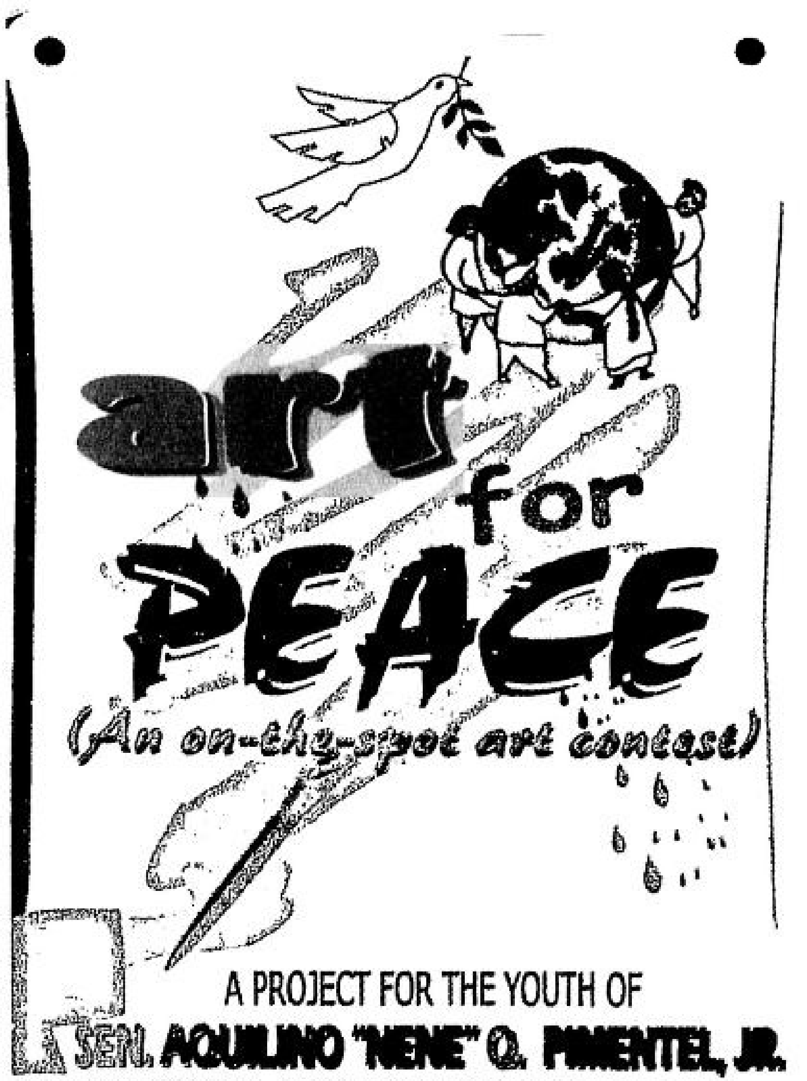
Today and tomorrow, Lav Diaz's five-hour film, "Batang West Side," will have two screenings per day (at 11:40 a.m. and 6 p.m.) at the Glorietta 4 Art Film Cinema, as part of the Best of Cinemanila 2001.

LAO. Fruitcake Lady.

The film is about a Filipino police detective living in Jersey City, USA. As he investigates the mysterious death of a teenage Filipina on West Side ave., he unravels the dark secrets of the Filipino community in New Jersey, and is forced to confront his own dark past as a torturer during the Marcos regime.

"Batang Trapo," a short film by Mes de Guzman, will be shown in between the two screening times for "Batang West Side."

'Classical Encounters'


art for PEACE
(An on-the-spot art contest)
A PROJECT FOR THE YOUTH OF
SEN. AQUILINO "NENE" Q. PIMENTEL, JR.

"ART FOR PEACE." Dissolving differences among people.

"Classical Encounters" at the Stars of Giorgio restaurant will have a special Christmas dinner presentation tonight, featuring sopranos Josephine Roces Chavez and Lorna Llames, tenor Jonathan Badon and baritone Chinggoy Alonzo. Stars of Giorgio is at the ground floor of the Priscilla 100 bldg., 2297 Pasong Tamo ext., Makati City. Call 893-7520.

Laurice Guillen takes on new role as president of FDFPI

(From page D1)

Fund that could come in several forms. These could include discounts or outright tax exemption for the purchase of raw materials, or partial or total funding of a project.

Under FDFPI's educational program, Laurice plans to add two more types of workshops. One would be a producers' workshop. "This is not just for producers who are active but also for filmmakers who are already in the industry who would like to produce their own material. It would also be of interest to people outside the industry but have some financing to offer who might go into film production but don't know how to go into it," she observes.

Laurice emphasized that the producers' workshop would not only focus on how to make a movie but would also cover how to choose material, how to find funding, and how to find a market, both locally and internationally.

The other workshop would be a technical workshop that Laurice considers necessary at this point in time. This is aimed at enhancing the skills of cinematographers, film editors and people involved in sound.

Expectations

"To make these workshops more specific and more helpful to the industry, we have requested the various guilds to put down in writing their respective job responsibilities and expectations. Out of this, we will be able to glean specifically where the problem areas are, and where we need further training," Laurice states.

She also sees the need for a venue where topics related to the movie industry can be discussed. This is why she is bent on proposing film fora that will be once-a-month activities.

"Initially, we will be consulting key people in the industry to come up with a list of possible topics to be discussed. The fora will be open to all members of the industry, including alternative filmmakers and students. It is film appreciation but starting with the workers in the industry.

"We have to agree on certain things such as the concept of what is quality in film. This can be discussed lengthily and we can come to an understanding, we can be enlightened on the important areas of filmmaking," she explains.

Website

Laurice also reveals that FDFPI is also coming up with a website for the local film industry. This will be useful for film people abroad who want to look at the local films available here, and whom to contact. The website will cover not only mainstream movies but alternative, digital and student movies as well.

One other activity that the FDFPI has been religiously attending to is the lobby for the passage of the FRB bill in the Senate. If and when the bill will be passed, the FDFPI will be abolished in order to give way for the Film Incentives Board.

"The bill provides that a maximum number of 30 films produced locally will be given rebates by the FRB, which will be under the Film Incentives Board," Laurice adds.

How much time does she spend working as head of FDFPI? "I don't report to the office everyday, but I am working for it daily. Aside from lobbying for the FRB bill, we are going on consultations with key people in the industry. So if we're talking of work, including advocacy, it is occupying a lot of my time. But ours is an influential industry, so we should really go out of our way to help it prosper."

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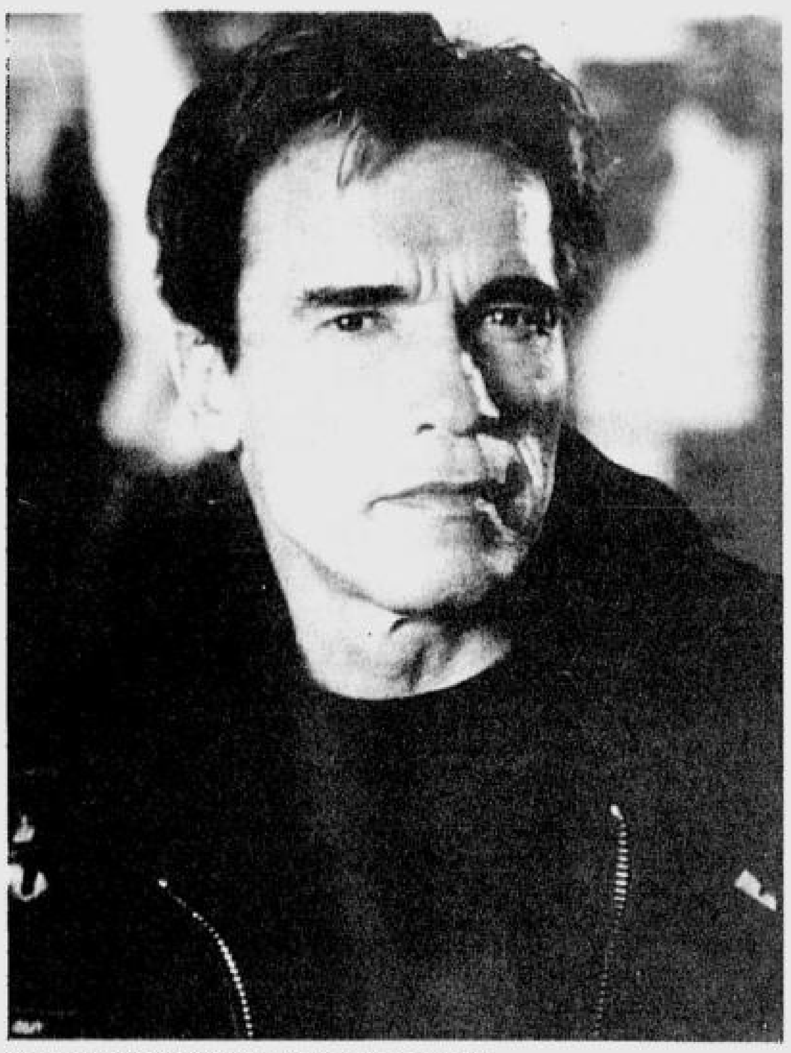
Stiff neck? For intense body aches and pains this Christmas, use Salonpas.

'Terminator' will be back, more expensive than ever

By Steve Gorman



SCHWARZENEGGER. $30 million salary.

LOS ANGELES—Arnold Schwarzenegger will be back—again—for a third installment of one of Hollywood's most potent franchises, but even middle aged Terminators don't come cheap.

Cyborg

The 54-year-old Austrian-born action star has clinched a record $30-million salary to return as a lead-slinging, leather-clad cyborg from the future in "Terminator 3," said a source close to the production, and several major studios were locked in a high-stakes bidding war for domestic rights to the film.

A spokesperson for Schwarzenegger said the star does not comment publicly on his deal, but when asked about the $30 million figure, she said, "We're not going to deny it."

"This is one of the most powerful franchises in movie history, so the budget and salaries are commensurate with the kind of franchise we're dealing with, said publicist Jill Eisenstadt.

While $20 million has long been considered the benchmark for big-league star salaries, their pay often is hard to pinpoint because it increasingly involves "back end" deals that give them a share of a film's box-office gross.

But one source close to the production said the $30 million figure was "pretty right on. That's what he's going to get upfront, and he could potentially make a lot more."

Unique position

One industry observer who asked not to be identified suggested that Schwarzenegger was in a unique position to command such a salary as an action star who is widely seen as nearing the end of his ability to convincingly play his trademark roles.

"It's a role that can't be played by anybody else, and there isn't any other role that he can play," the source said. "This is more important for Arnold than it is for any of the buyers."

While plot details of "T3," subtitled "Rise of the Machines," have remained a closely-guarded secret, the story is reportedly set 10 years after T2 with a twentysomething John Conner and his T-800 cyborg pal, Schwarzenegger, doing battle with a female Terminatrix whose powers and morphing abilities exceed that of their previous nemesis.

The overall cost of bringing T3 to the screen has reportedly been placed at $165 million to $180 million, which would easily eclipse the record $135 million believed spent to make "Pearl Harbor."

According to entertainment trade paper Daily Variety, the producers behind the project have set their asking price at $50 million, plus half of the gross receipts generated from the film.

Sources told Reuters that production would begin in April with Jonathan Mostow, who directed the submarine war flick "U-571," succeeding James Cameron at the helm of the latest "Terminator." Variety has put Mostow's fee at more than $5 million.

Keen studio interest

The film is seen as a potential "tentpole" picture for the summer of 2003, and studio interest is keen given that "Terminator2: Judgement Day" grossed more than $500 million worldwide after its 1991 release. Experts say a franchise with such proven box-office clout normally has a studio home by the time it gets to its third outing.

"Almost every studio in town… is looking to handle domestic rights to this picture," one person with knowledge of the talks told Reuters. "Over the last few days, this has been the hottest property in Hollywood."

Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures, DreamWorks SKG and a combination of the Walt Disney Co. and Dimension films were initially the most serious contenders for the film, sources said.

Rights to the film are held by producing partners Andy Vajna and Mario Kassar of C-2 Pictures with the backing of production company and film financier Intermedia Films, a unit of German based International Media which also financed "The Wedding Planner," "K-Pax," and the upcoming dramas "K-19" starring Harrison Ford and "Basic" with Samuel L. Jackson and John Travolta.

Reuters

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Have a God-centered Christmas, everyone!

LOTUS POND

R.Valencia and S. Bismark

JESUS Christ came for a purpose and one of the best teachings he imparted was to love your enemy. This instruction was his gift to us. He didn't come to just talk about loving your family, relatives or friends, but he specifically wanted us to love even the people we don't like, people who hurt us, hate us and may even want to destroy us.

Great example

By his own great exmaple, Jesus Christ showed us how to look at our enemies, the people who wish us ill. He prayed for their well-being while he was on the cross. Who among us have been tortured like Jesus? None, and yet our hearts seethe with anger for those who have wronged us in very small and minor ways.

On a larger scale, this world is ravaged by wars and conflicts between people who see each other as the enemy. Governments now employ armies of "peacekeepers" armed with guns to prevent people from killing each other. Society has conditioned its members to think that we have "traditional" enemies—those who throughout history have fought on opposite sides. It is no longer even clear what the conflict is about—it's just that the other person has a particular label which is considered negative: black vs. white, Muslim vs. Christian, Sunnis vs. Shiite Muslims. Children are raised to wear certain symbols that idenify them with one group and taught to avoid associating with the other group.

Brothers

Jesus Christ went amongst different groups and taught them the great prayer, "Our Father in heaven, holy be Your Name." He showed that we all have one Supreme Father, we are all His children, we are all brothers, we are all relatives.

We call our Father by different names—Jehovah, Allah, Yaweh, Abba, Krishna, Rama, etc. Just as you may have many nicknames, our Father also has many glorious names. Our Father loves us all and he doesn't discriminate or reject any individual who calls Him by a particular name, to offer prayers and worship in whatever language or attire. He doesn't see or label someone as Muslim or Christian—all He sees is His child, His beloved child.

We discriminate and create divisions. We claim, "This is my God. My God is real; your God is not real." God means the Supreme Person. There is only one Supreme Being and He can be approached by any sincere seeker of truth. Jesus Christ preached love for God and love for our neighbor. Love our Father and love our brothers who are all spirit-souls, part and parcel of God.

If we respect and love our Father, then we can also feel respect and love for His beloved children. We should respect their way of worshipping and praising the Father, wherever it may be done—in a mosque, temple or church.

Anger

Chaitanya Mahaprahu came to teach that the method of chanting and hearing the Holy Names of God will purify the heart and mind of all sins and material desires. It will take away the anger in our hearts that prevents us from experiencing love and peace.

In the spririt of Christmas, let's worship Jesus Christ and the Surpeme Father. Let us also pray for the well-being of all our brothers, including those who wish us ill. From our hearts, let us erase the anger that makes our life more miserable and gloomy. Make peace with everyone and this will make our Father and Jesus Christ truly happy. And by pleasing our Father, we will also taste love, happiness and peace. May you all have a God-centered Christmas this season.

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ANSON-ROA. Sang "Handel's Messiah with choir in US.

BARRIOS. Won contest singing "Miracle of Christmas."

WILSON. A song about contemporary issues.

GARY V. Best version of "Pasko Na."

ALAJAR. Hasn't celebrated Christmas outside the country.

SARMENTA. His Christmases were always sad.

Stories behind celebrities' memorable Christmas carols

BY RITO P. ASILO

CHRISTMAS is the biggest, and longest, holiday in the Philippines. For us, it begins long before the Americans start making plans for their Thanksgiving turkey, or months before we prepare our brooms, matches and candles for *undas*, and long after the three magi have parked their camels in their stables. As early as August, one can hear Christmas carols slowly finding their way to the airwaves, reminding us, subliminally, that we have to start saving money for our many *inaanak*, a uniquely Filipino way of practicing the concept of godparenthood-drowning by numbers!

Christmas cheer

And while Nat 'King' Cole croons his way to our congenitally sentimental and musical Pinoy, hearts every year, with his ode to the Western concept of Christmas cheer ("Chestnuts roasting on an open fire/Jack Frost nipping at your nose.../And folks dressed up like Eskimos/ Everybody knows a turkey and some mistletoe help to make the season bright"), we do have our own way of spreading and observing the Christmas spirit-from the olfactory and gastronomic wonders of the incredibly exclusive Christmas treat, *puto-bumbong*, to the awesome display of our multi-colored parols!

Yes, it's that time of year-Kris Kringle, family reunions, a protracted school and office break, carolling around your barangay with friends (Singing, "Thank you, thank you, *ang babarat ninyo!"* and half-meaning it.), disconnecting phone lines to hide from your godchildren, and *Simbang Gabi* (even if we just sit there by the church pews with our minds half-listening, half-snoring). Oh, and did I mention Christmas carols? How drab would Christmas be without them?

So, we asked some of our favorite people in the entertainment industry to tell us what their favorite Christmas songs are, and what has made these songs memorable to them.

Holiday spirit

The answers range from sentimental to cheerful, funny to pragmatic. No matter what they said, their answers proved that people are really at their cheerful best when the holiday spirit is within them.

For well-loved veteran actress Boots Anson-Roa, hearing "Handel's Messiah," a classical holiday staple, brings back memories of her and her family's 11-year stay in Washington, D.C.

"I worked part-time as a subscription agent in the States, and one of the perks was the thrill of getting tickets to watch shows for free," she relates, "so I got to watch, among others, "Les Miserables," "Cats" and an annual Christmas concert whose main highlight was the chance to sing 'Handel's Messiah' with the featured choir and orchestra.

"Usually staged at the Eisenhower Theater or at the Opera House, the annual concert was staged at the lawn of the Kennedy Center that year-and I got to sing along with them!"

Uplifting

She explains: "The music is uplifting to the spirit. Imagine yourself singing along with a 100-voice-choir on Christmas! I felt homesick because there's no place like home, and there's nothing like celebrating Christmas in the Philippines!" In fact, her son used to make *parols* during Christmas in the US to show that they were Pinoys-and proud of it!

Monique Wilson, New Voice Company's Artistic Director and top actress, just wants to spread the cheer by spending Christmas with her mom, Terry, and with people close to her. So, she made it a point to fly home from her London studies for the holidays.

Monique says that while there are so many beautiful songs about the meaning of Christmas, a lot of them are simply hopeful songs that don't really offer solutions. "I love the promise that the spirit of these songs bring to our lives. Christmas songs lend a sense of catharsis to a lot of the cynicism that may have gathered in our hearts in the past year."

Being the activist that she is, she chose David Foster's "Grown-up Christmas List" because, she explains, "It's the only Christmas song that talks about contemporary issues and a genuine concern for matters that affect all of us, whether it's Christmas or not.

"It talks about lives being torn apart by all sorts of 'wars,' and asks, *prays* for definite solutions to these. It prays for a kind of love that never ends."

Funny incident

Award-winning film director Laurice Guillen, maker of the highly anticipated "American Adobo," remembers a funny incident related to the song, "Joy to the World." She recalls: "This happened about five years ago during Christmas, when we went to hear mass at the Mary the Queen church in Greenhills."

She, her husband, Johnny Delgado, and daughters, Ana and Ina, like going to Mary the Queen because it has a strong choir, and a beautiful repertoire that includes "Joyful, Joyful," among others.

When it was time for the finale, the voices and the singing soared and the repertoire segued to the infectious holiday hymn, "Joy to the World." *Direk* Laurice sang along before the first strains of the song could explode into a celebratory singing.

Unfortunately, the pitch of the song was too high for comfort, so she kept adjusting her key, desperately trying to find the right note, but never quite succeeded. The mass ended with the whole family laughing and giggling at the experience.

Singer Bayang Barrios vividly remembers the song, "Miracle of Christmas," because, she says, "My mom used to sing it to me as a four-year-old child in Mindanao, even if she didn't remember the complete lyrics of the song. I loved listening to her and the image stuck in my mind."

"It was the first Christmas song I learned to sing. What made it even more memorable was that it was the song that I sang the first time I joined a singing competition."

Question

Bayang sang the first few strains of the song to us, seemingly lost in thought, before she answered our question as to how she did in the contest. She beams and simply says, "I won!"

Singer/Actress Lynn Sherman, whose voice reminds us of Dianne Schuur's, says "The Christmas Song" brings back bittersweet memories of her childhood home. "I know that the lyrics are very American, but there's the element of sentimentality in its melody that's very Filipino. I used to hear a lot of it when I was a little girl, and has, over years of hearing it, have learned to love it.

Old house

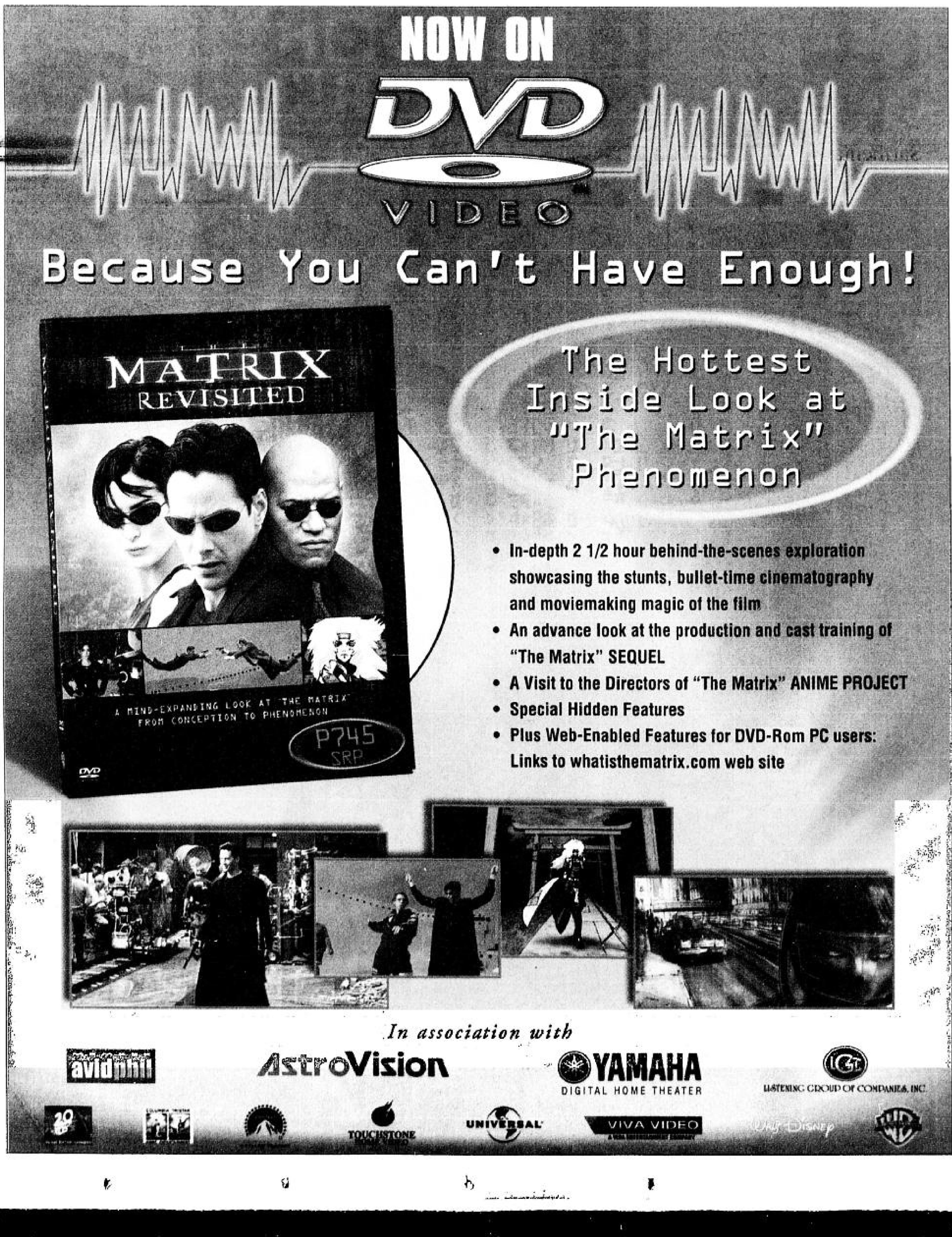
"Recently, however, my family moved out of our old house, the house I lived in since I was a child, the house I grew up in. So, everytime I hear the song now, it reminds me of how and where I grew up." Lynn says it doesn't only bring back memories, it also reminds you of your past.

Angelu de Leon, she who wowed critics with her steamy portrayal in "Bulaklak ng Maynila," likes the spirit and joyful message of the song "Kumukutikutitap" that has become a Pinoy holiday staple. She explains why it became memorable for her:

"It was the first Christmas song I learned to sing. It also showed, through its lyrics, how Christmas should be celebrated. There may be something about the lyrics that's a bit weird, but it clearly demonstrates the Filipino's way of celebrating the yuletide spirit."

For actor Romnick Sarmenta, it doesn't matter how many times Gary

STORIES/ P. D5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'The Glass House' is a gripping suspense-thriller

A HIGH-SCHOOL-AGE orphan and her baby brother find that all is not as it should be when they move into their guardians' creepy crystalline home on the cliffs of Malibu in Columbia Pictures' new fright fest, "The Glass House." "Deep Impact" star Leelee Sobieski and "The Perfect Storm's" Diane Lane topline the critically hailed suspense-thriller.

State of shock

In the film, Ruby Baker (Sobieski) and her younger brother, Rhett (Trevor Morgan), are in a state of shock after they learn that their parents have been killed in a car crash. At least their material needs are taken care of: The Bakers left behind a $4 million fortune.

In the meantime, their parents' friends and new guardians, Erin and Terry Glass (Diane Lane and Stellan Skarsgard), seem sympathetic. So when Ruby and Rhett are fetched by limo and taken to the Glass house—a fantasy of a mansion high above Malibu—things are looking up.

But what's really going on in this odd abode, decorated with glass walls and steel sofas? Ruby and Rhett assume the strange vibe anti decor are just part of life at the Glass house—but soon there are other creepy signs.

The siblings must sleep in the same room, even though the house is huge, and there are no rules. And why is Erin, a beautiful, successful doctor, so unhappy when her husband's around?

Quirky adults

As Ruby begins to suspect that these adults are not only quirky but criminal, she vows to save herself and her brother from the Glasses' grip. But what if the overstressed teen is imagining things?

"Ruby and Rhett are like a modern-day Hansel and Gretel, trying to find their way out of a deep, dark forest," says Daniel Sackheim, an Emmy-winning television director who is making his feature-film debut with "The Glass House." "(It's) the consummate coming-of-age story set within a psychological thriller."

"'The Glass House' is kind of like a disturbing, dream-like fairy tale," adds Sobieski. "What makes Ruby come of age are not some nice little adventures that she has but something (dark) that's slapped her in the face.

She says, 'OK, I've got to grow up now.'"

What will happen to Ruby and Rhett? The secrets of "The Glass House" will break wide open soon in a theater near you!

Matt Damon plays expert pickpocket in 'Ocean's Eleven'

MATT Damon stars in Warner Bros.' new crime action-comedy "Ocean's Eleven" as Linus Caldwell, the talented pickpocket with a legacy to live up to. "Linus is the new kid on the block," co-star George Clooney says. "He's the pledge who usually gets the worst things to do. But he earns his stripes through this heist."

Grifter

"I wanted to play this role because I didn't want the movie to come out and not be a part of it," Damon says. "Linus, whose father was a well-known grifter, has been around the con his entire life. He's got very quick hands and can lift anything from anybody. When Danny looks him up, Linus is small time, working alone picking pockets on the El in Chicago.

"He wants in on this heist because it will be the biggest score of all time and if they pull it off, people will be dining out on their names forever. They'll be set for life. And everybody wants to see Vegas get taken to a certain degree because everyone's got his own Vegas tale of woe.

"What makes the story more interesting," Damon continues, "is that as the movie continues we realize the entire scam was never about the money for Danny.

Great romance

The whole thing is about getting his wife back, getting his life back. So at the end of the day, it's a great romance."

Damon talks more about "Ocean's Eleven" in the following interview.

I thought the film was really cool. It has a classic feel to it. What drew you in taking the movie?

It was the prospect of not only working with this world class director, a guy who's just the man of the moment, definitely, but also to be with this whole cast. I hadn't seen anything that would provide that kind of opportunity ever, in my career and I don't know if I ever will again, it just seemed like a once in a lifetime.

What was important for your character to get invited to join this group?

It kinda mirrored the experience of my joining the cast. In the movie, Danny Ocean comes up and says, "Are you in or are you out?" And that's kind of what I felt like. Steven [Soderbergh] and I read this great script and I met with him and he was like, "Are you in or are you out?"

Two-second decision

And, it was just a two-second decision, you know? I knew I had to be in this one.

The 11 guys seem very human, unlike in other heist movies...

There was some great humor in the script and there was minor augmentation, at times, to bring that humor out, and Steven really had a perfect sense of where the movie was at all times, he knew when to bring the humor up or dial up the intensity a little bit or the suspense and, it's just a masterful job of direction.

In a way, it's very satisfying to see these guys taking the money away from a casino. Why do you think there's a social satisfaction in that?

Because it's set in Las Vegas, it's acceptable that these guys are trying to pull a big job.

MATT DAMON/ P. D6

DAMON. Classic feel.

Stories behind . . . (From page D4)

Valenciano's classic, "Pasko Na, Sinta Ko," gets remade, it will always be the best interpretation of the song. Unabashedly, the actor, who stunned the entertainment industry with his searing performance in "Miguel/Michelle," admits that he idolizes Mr. Pure Energy. "What's best about Gary's version is that it's devoid of unnecessary drama and vocal improvisation. He does it with simple, beautiful singing, which actually brings out the essence and real meaning of the song," he adds.

He also remembers intently listening to the lyrics of "Merry Christmas, Darling" (Karen Carpenter's version) many loveless Christmases ago. He laughs at the recollection: "My Christmases were always sad. Either I didn't have a girlfriend, or if I did, the relationship was always *magulo*."

Of course, Christmas this year is distinctly different. For starters, he is now married to his childhood sweetheart, Harlene Bautista, and shares the responsibility of rearing two beautiful kids.

It's the same thing with Harlene, who now carries "Sarmenta." Harlene laughs at how petty teen-agers are. "For the *bagets*, Christmas becomes an even bigger deal if they don't have a special someone to celebrate their Christmas with. I should know because I used to be one of them! (laughs) So, I used to 'celebrate' those realizations of solitude by listening to Martin Nievera's 'Christmas Won't Be The Same Without You.'"

(In jest, Romnick protests Harlene's choice of singer: "Hindi, Gary *dapat*!" and laughs.) Harlene then explains that, whether you are happy or sad on Christmas, the message of the song remains the same.

Gina Alajar, for her part, thinks that "White Christmas" is appropriate for her. While it is true that the great actress has gone to many countries, she has never celebrated Christmas Day itself outside the country.

Snow

"The child in us sometimes dreams of spending Christmas Day with snow and all," she lightheartedly giggles. Perhaps it is the actress in her that yearns to find out how and what it feels to have snow falling on your head on Christmas Day itself! She further explains, " I'd like to know how it feels to be away from home on Christmas. *Malungkot ba talaga*?"

Television personality Cory Quirino has both a thought-provoking and funny story to tell about her own memorable Christmas songs: When she was four years, she heard the song, "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," which warned kids 'not to be naughty but nice.'

Her mother (who was amazed at this recollection) cautioned her that she was going to get her Christmas wish-a life-sized walking doll-*if* she remained a good girl until Christmas. And true enough, she watched her every move, was very polite and courteous. On Christmas Day, she crawled under the tree and got what she wanted. "Only, my Mom didn't tell me the gift came from our pediatrician, Dr. Celdran. She said it came from Santa!," she laughs at the recollection.

Home alone

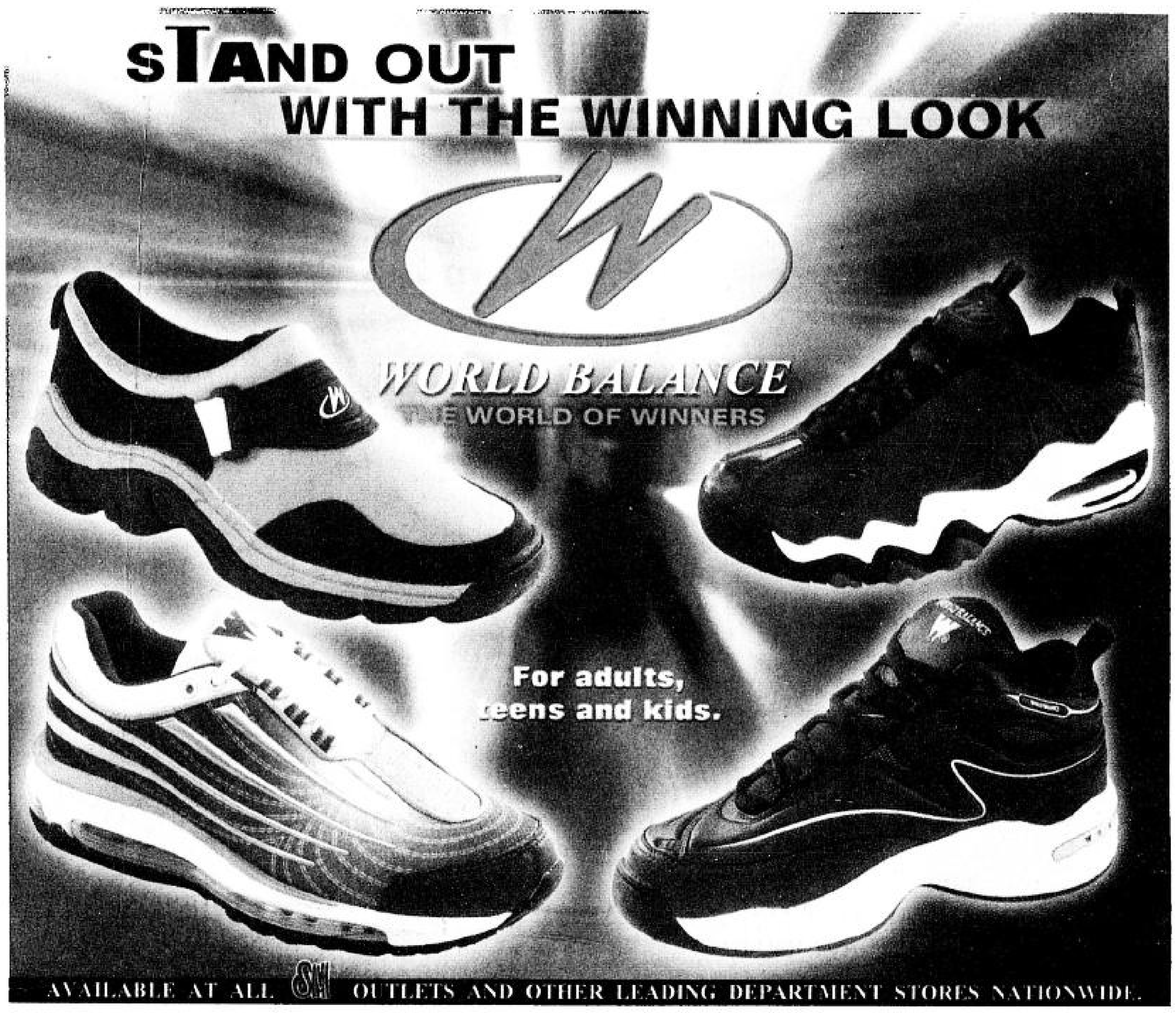
On the other hand, "O Holy Night" reminds Cory of the time that she was left home alone. She says, "I was 14 years old then, and it was Christmas eve. My parents weren't home yet, and I was all alone. I turned on the radio and heard 'O Holy Night,' and I started to feel lonely. I prayed for their arrival and, an hour later, they did come home! The experience reinforced in me the meaning and value of family, and how important it is to be together during important occasions, like Christmas."

Finally, singer/ musical theater actress Dianne dela Fuente, likes the musicality of "A Perfect Christmas," originally sung by Jose Mari Chan and remade by Jaya.

She explains: "The song has just the right tempo, and you can hum along with it, *walang masyadong arte sa* structure." She also likes the sentimentality of "Merry Christmas, Darling," because the song's emotions and melody blend well.

"The message of wanting to share your love on Christmas is the centerpiece of both songs. What could be more important than the message of love, especially on Christmas?"

> 'It doesn't matter how many times Gary Valenciano's classic, 'Pasko Na' gets remade, it will always be the best interpretation of the song according to Romnick Sarmenta



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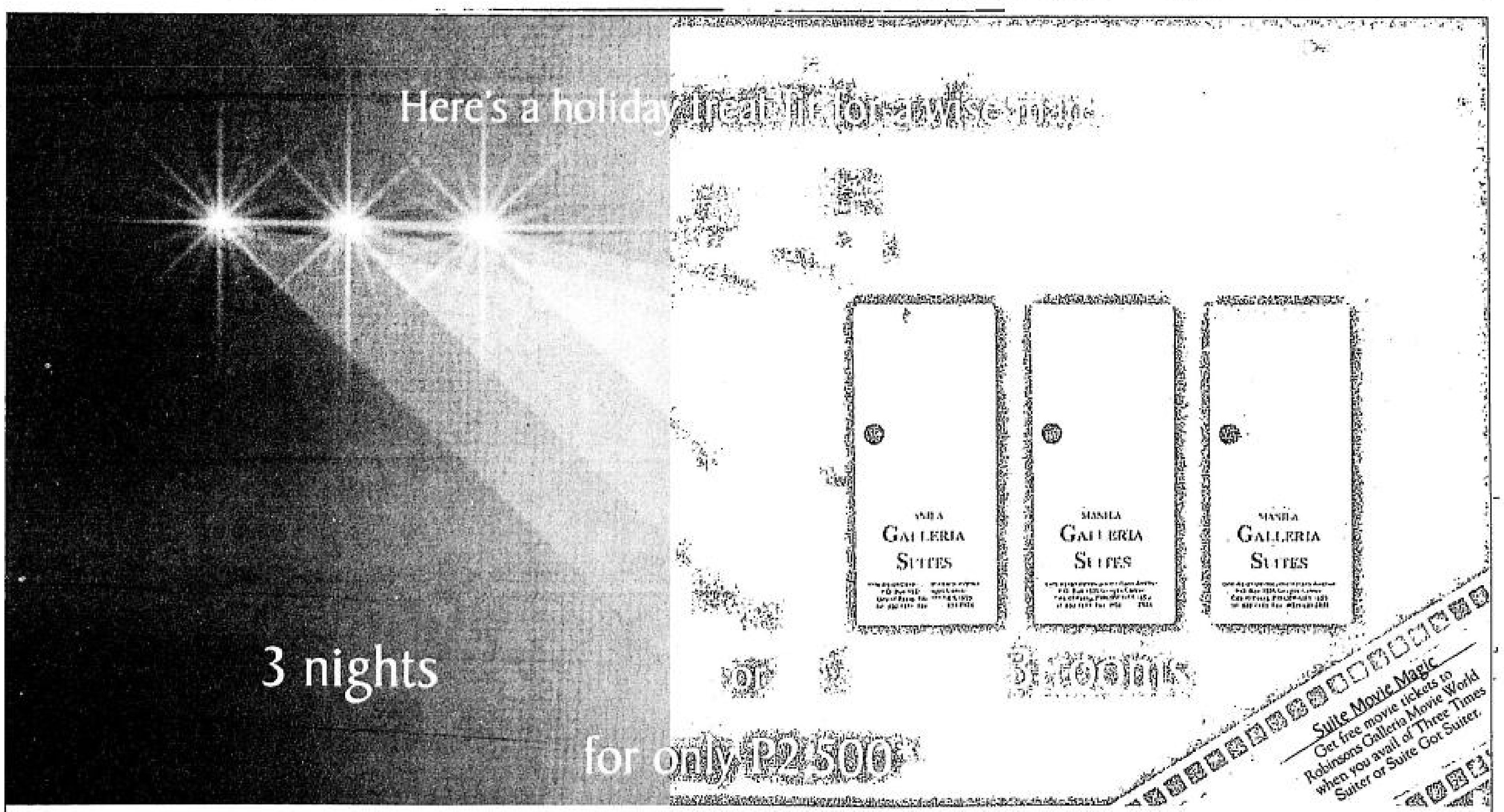
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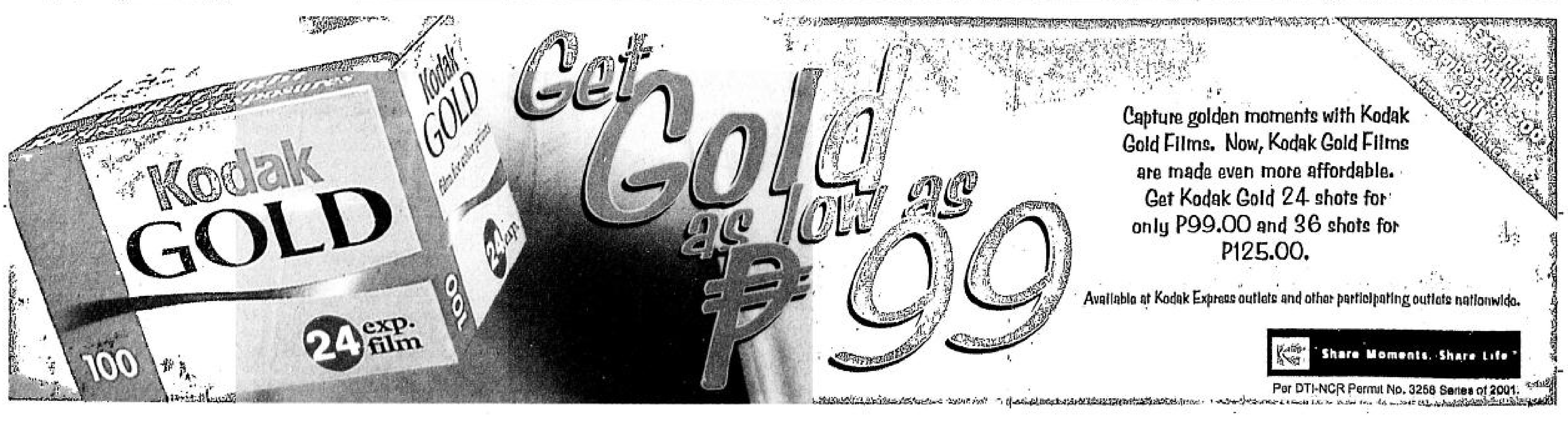

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ENTERTAINMENT BOOKSHELF

'GMA Gold' makes for interesting but light reading

BY NOELANI TORRE

NOT surprisingly, there's a lot of back-patting and praise-singing in "GMA Gold," the company's coffee table book that chronicles and celebrates its "50 years of broadcast history." Many of the superlatives that they heap on themselves are well-deserved, though, as GMA is indeed this country's most-awarded network and is definitely " a leader in Philippine Broadcasting."

Movers and shakers

This glossy gold-colored volume makes for interesting but light reading. One won't find comprehensive analyses of radio and television history here. What one will find are large glitzy photographs of the movers and shakers of GMA and the country, several essays by broadcasting veterans, and highlights from the past 50 years.

It's a leaf-through sort of book where one won't get lost even if one begins at the middle.

Four of the five chapters are trips down memory lane, as the company's history unfolds in splendid pictorial detail. It was Robert "Uncle Bob" Stewart, an American war correspondent, who founded GMA though it wasn't called that then. On March 1, 1950, he sent out his first newscast "from AM station dzBB on the fourth floor of Caluo Building in Escolta, Manila."

That's GMA's founding date. It was known then as the Republic Broadcasting System (RBS). From such humble beginnings rose the company as we know it today, and executive vice president Gilberto Duavit Jr. is quick to point out that " the story of the company is reminiscent of a fairy tale spanning 50 years of struggle and success."

Canned shows

Starting as a "mom-and-pop operation," RBS Channel 7 was a floundering company during the '60s, held up only by canned US shows such as "Combat," "Mission Impossible," "77 Sunset Strip," " The Untouchables," and " Ben Casey." It was also during this period that they started airing what would be the forerunner of today's dance shows. "Dancetime with Chito." Filipinos just love to dance, it seems, or watching other folk shake their booty on TV.

When the '70s rolled in, so did a new management composed of Gilberto M. Duavit, Menardo R. Jimenez, and Felipe L. Gozon. They were, respectively, a congressman, a certified public accountant and a lawyer.

They took over RBS in 1974, changed its name to GMA (Greater Manila Area)—Radio Television Arts, and as the book gushes, "steered a struggling TV station out of the dusk and into the light." They also coined the station ID that that every Filipino can now hum in his sleep: "Where you belong."

Canned shows like "Charlie's Angels," "Little House on the Prairie," " Starsky and Hutch," "Eight is Enough," "CHiPS," and "Three's Company" were still the norm, though their success enabled the production of local shows such as "Katha," ``Ms. Ellaneous," and ``Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko." GMA in the '70s was "the mouse that roared" as their news programs, "News at Seven" and "GMA Evening News" fearlessly criticized the Marcos administration.

Too violent

But of course, what most of us remember is that the martial law dictatorship forced the network to yank "Voltes V," "Daimos," and "Mazinger Z" from our screens because they were "too violent."

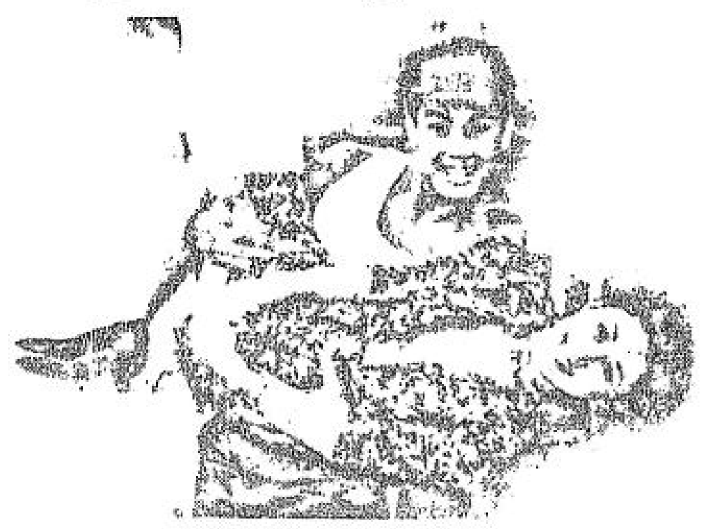
Animé rules again nowadays, with "Pokemon" and "Flame of Recca," as some examples. Take that, hypocrites!

The '80s gave birth to "GMA Supershow," "Vilma!," "FPJ sa GMA" and "Penthouse Live." We grew up watching the now mayor of Lipa dressed in far-out outfits (usually wearing a tanga) getting thrown about by her back-up dancers. (Remember that star dancers hand joke?)

On "Penthouse Live," we watched the romance between the two hosts, Martin Nievera and Pops Fernandez, blossom and literally bear fruit.

It was also during the '80s when the channel won the first of the many awards they would win in succeeding years.

These were from the PMPC Star Awards, the Gawad CCP, the Catholic Mass Media Awards, the New York Film and TV Festival, and the KBP Golden Dove Awards.


VILMA Santos dances with Richard Gomez on her old Channel 7 show.

Peabody Award

The latest, and biggest, cut of bacon they've brought home so far is the Peabody Award, the broadcasting equivalent of the Pulitzer, which they got for Investigative Reporting ("Kidneys for Sale" and "Kamao" by`` I-Witness" and "Child Labor Report" by `` Brigada Siete").

The '90s saw GMA beefing up its news and public affairs, and venturing into filmmaking. Its newscasts are considered by many to be the most credible and the corporation has released such critically-acclaimed films as "Sa Pusod ng Dagat," `` Jose Rizal," and "Muro-Ami."

GMA, along with the Philippine Daily Inquirer, has also launched a dotcom site, inq7.net. Indeed, the company has its finger in every pie, from the internet to films and music-making. And it's all here in this coffee-table tome. Well, not all, perhaps, just the highlights, but it's informative nevertheless, and sometimes sentimental.

As we flip the pages, and see our favorite stars in big hair and tangas and Tina Monzon-Palma looking as sharp as ever, it's as if we're growing up all over again. Truly, this is the network where we belong.

Chito Roño pays tribute to film icon Armando Goyena in 'Yamashita'

GOYENA AND BARRIOS. Lead stars.

BY REMY M. UMEREZ

ONE special treat MaQ's "Yamashita" The Tiger's Treasure" offers is the rare comeback appearance of film icon Armando Goyena.

Chito Roño who directs the multi-million war epic drama, had only Goyena in mind to play Lolo Melo, the wartime witness to Japanese atrocities in the wake of the great Yamashita operation launched by retreating Japanese forces.

Matinee idol

Goyena was a matinee idol during his time. He formed a love team with Tessie Quintana in their LVN days. He was a society boy, a dashing hero of countless romance and adventure pics.

One movie he loves to remember was "Medalyong Perlas," a trilogy. In the episode "Welga" he was nominated for best actor and lost because it was not a full-length feature. Five years later, when another omnibus film was produced, an actress was nominated and won. Armando felt he was cheated.

This is the second time for Chito Roño to work with Armando who turned 81 this month. The first time was in "Eskapo" which starred Richard Gomez and Christopher de Leon. It was a cameo role (he appeared in one scene only) unlike in "Yamashita" where the two lead stars are played by Goyena and teen heartthrob Danilo Barrios.

We asked Chito why he tapped Armando for themajor role. His answer: "I needed someone who lived in that era. In my conversation with Tito Pinggoy, he told me how at 21, when the war just broke out, he got slapped by Japanese sentries simply for refusing to bow to them. He will never forget the day he was thrown inside an old *sinehan* with his father and 50 other Filipinos for no real reason, and how they escape from the gunfire and grenades exploding in front of them.

Garbage van

"Running for their lives, they slid under a garbage van until the Americans rescued them. Tito Pinggoy never spoke to any Japanese since then. He showed the shrapnels embedded in his left arm as a reminder of the cruelties of war."

Goyena almost backed out from the role due to his vertigo. Chito assured him, however, that he would be allowed to rest after essaying a grueling scene. On the other hand, Goyena's children feared for their father's health because of the risky scenes involved, like climbing up a mountain and cave spelunkings since Armando is already in his 80s and has undergone a triple bypass. But his love for acting prevailed in the end.

One of the highlights in the movie is the confrontation scene between Goyena and Vic Diaz, who excels in portraying a Japanese official. In "Yamashita," Diaz is the cruel Japanese officer who comes back 60 years later as a crime syndicate boss out to stake his claim on the loot he left behind, the Yamashita treasure.

Magical moment

Chito comments: "It was like reliving one magical moment. There they are on the screen, two senior actors, exchanging harsh dialogue. If you remember Joan Crawford and Bette Davis in 'Whatever Happened to Baby Jane,' *gano'n ang* impact *ng dalawa*. I watched in awe because their lines were long, and yet no one made a mistake. They were so effective that the people watching couldn't help but be carried away."

In another scene, shot on location in the United States, Lolo Melo and his grandson Jobert (Danilo Barrios) takes a stroll and he imparts valuable lessons in life, and the sequence was so touching. "*Para silang mag-lolo in* real life and the bystanders cried," says Chito.

The director almost failed to convince Goyena to shed a tear in one dramatic sequence. "He was not in favor of a man crying because he says that, even when he lost his wife, he held back his tears. I presumed it has something to do with his macho image during his time. After much *paliwanagan*, however, I won."

Cameo role

For the first time and probably the last, Goyena's only son Johnny appears (in a cameo role) with his father, something which his daughters failed to do. Miko Palanca, a real-life grandson of Armando, is cast as a sci-fi and occult freak who offers solutions in finding the hidden treasure.

One hopes that the filmfest competition's sympathy vote will work to the advantage of Armando Goyena, who has yet to receive an acting trophy.

As far as Chito is concerned, trophy or not, Goyena's performance in "Yamashita" will register in the viewer's mind for a long, long time.

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Lou Pearlman creates new boy band, Natural

TRANS Continental CEO Lou Pearlman is not one to rest on his laurels. Always armed with a strong vision, the acknowledged master of the phenomenal rise of the boy band craze continues to discover raw talent.

Major stars

After making major stars of the Backstreet Boys, *Nsync, LFO and O-Town (featured in the MTV/ABC hit series, "Making The Band"), Lou redefines the five-man act by introducing a group that puts the band back into "boy band."

The pop music impresario's latest discovery is aptly called Natural.

It is composed of Ben Bledsoe, "J" Josh Horn, Michael Johnson, Patrick King Jr., and Marc Terenzi who variously play the electric guitar, bass and drums, keyboards, violin and sax. Their catchy first single "Put Your Arms Around Me," continues to win fans all over—from Miami to Manila.

Private jets

Lou entered boy band management in the early '90s after years of chartering private jets for music industry giants Michael Jackson and Madonna. His company, Trans Continental Airlines, was hired by then teen icons New Kinds on the Block for a tour.

Surprised that a young group could afford such luxury, he turned to first cousin Art Garfunkel who told him that those acts earned as much as $100 million. That was when he discovered that he was "in the wrong business."

After putting the Backstreet Boys on the world music map, Lou has a sprawling $6 million recording studio in Orlando (O-Town) that trains *the* young stars of tomorrow. Among the talents he manages are C-Note, LFO, Take Five and Lugo.

Matt Damon . . .

(From page D5)

It plays a little with the myth or the legend of "Robin Hood," in a way.

Right, except these guys aren't giving it away to anybody.

That's cool. Let me ask you, considering that this was an ensemble cast, did you approach your part a different way than if it were a lead part?

No, I approached it in the exact same way. I think one of the things that was great about this script and about the group of people that got together to do it was that nobody was grandstanding to get attention.

Integrity

People were happy to kind of be extras in some scenes and not draw attention to them, and the integrity of the ensemble was never compromised by anyone being selfish. This was a group of 11 pretty generous actors who wanted it to flow the way it should flow and that's what made it pretty special.

The important thing was the story basically, I guess?

Absolutely. I think everybody was willing to fall on the sword to make the story work. Even if we weren't willing to do that, Steven would have whipped us into shape, so it was a pretty good team going in.

What makes Steven Soderbergh different? What do you think he brings?

He's really intelligent and has great taste. At the end of the day, a lot of it comes down to taste. And what he thinks is funny turns out to be funny. And he creates an environment that's really relaxed and great and allows people to do their best work.

"Ocean 's Eleven " is a Warner Bros. film opening soon in Metro Manila.

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DEC. 22

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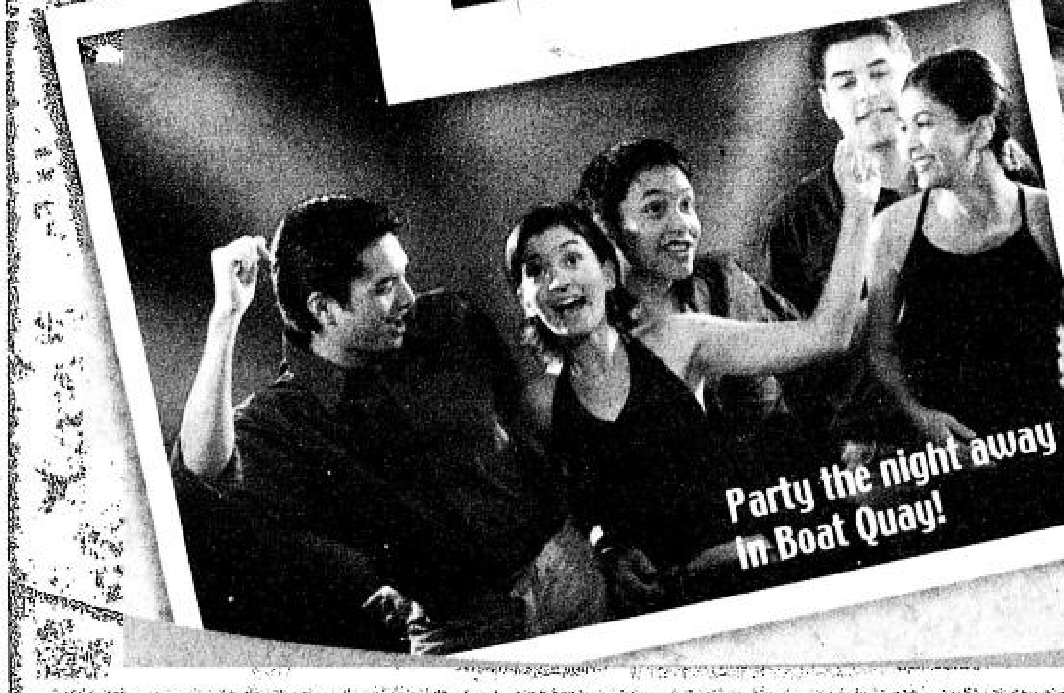
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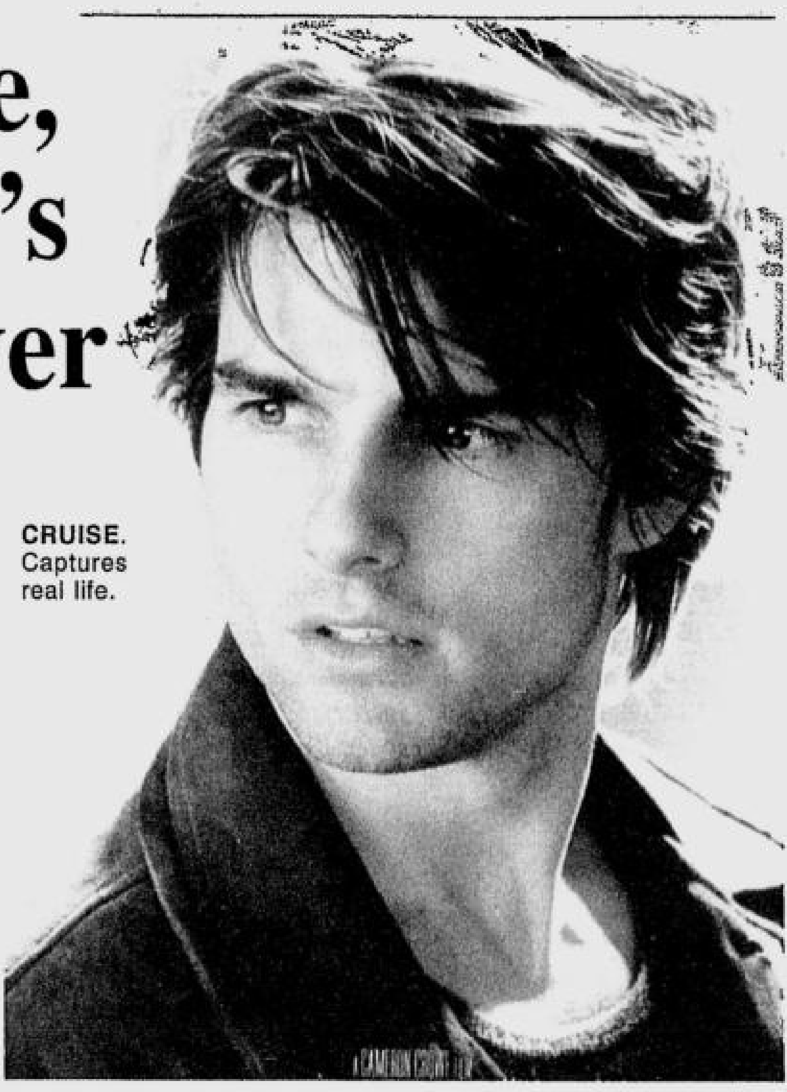
Saturday SPECIAL

Tom Cruise, Hollywood's power mover



CRUISE. Captures real life.

ASIDE from being always in Hollywood's Power List, what do Tom Cruise, Cameron Crowe and Cameron Diaz have in common? A new, challenging movie!

Business savvy

Voted No. 3 in Entertainment Weekly's Power 101 list, actor-producer Cruise has a new film "Vanilla Sky" which re-teams him with his "Jerry Maguire" director Cameron Crowe. Combining a knack for choosing artistically risky but challenging material "(Magnolia)" and an acute business savvy, his production company (with Paula Wagner) ramped up with five eclectic projects. Some say that the only gripe most producers harbor against him is his inability to be in *every* movie.

In "Vanilla Sky," Cruise stars as David Aames who uncovers eternal truths about love, himself and the world. Director Crowe has this to say of Cruise: "Tom is a gift to any director. He brings a kind of emotion central to anything he does, and in our movie he makes David Aames every man, so the audience can identify with him. Tom captures real life. He puts anything you want in a script on the screen and he works tirelessly until you're happy."

Cruise describes his character with as much passion. Like Crowe, he says that David Aames is kind of like a "Prince of New York" who has inherited everything, worked hard at nothing, and is essentially the facade of what people think they want to be.

Price

"He's a guy with a lot of potential, and the

TOM/p.E2

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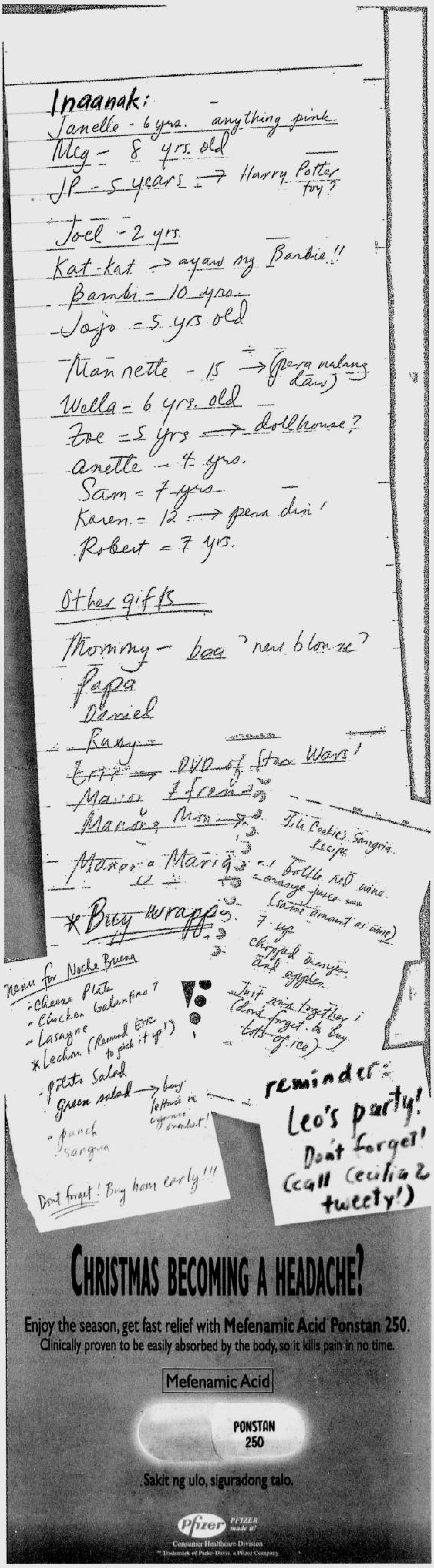
Inaanak:
Janelle - 6 yrs. anything pink
Meg - 8 yrs. old
JP - 5 years → Harry Potter toy?
Joel - 2 yrs.
Kat-kat → ayaw ng Barbie!!
Bambi - 10 yrs.
Jojo - 5 yrs old
Mannette - 15 → (pera na lang daw)
Wella - 6 yrs. old
Zoe - 5 yrs → dollhouse?
anette - 4 yrs.
Sam - 7 yrs.
Karen - 12 → pera din!
Robert - 7 yrs.

Other gifts
Mommy - bag? new blouse?
Papa
Daniel
Rusty
~~Erip~~ → DVD of Star Wars!
Manoy Efren
Manang Mon →
Manang Maria

*Buy wrapping

Tita Cookie's Sangria Recipe
- 1 bottle red wine
- orange juice (same amount as wine)
7-up
chopped oranges and apples
Just mix together! (don't forget to buy lots of ice)

Menu for Noche Buena
- Cheese Plate
- Chicken Galantina?
- Lasagne
*Lechon (Remind Eric to pick it up!)
- Potato Salad
Green salad → buy lettuce in organic market!
- punch
sangria
Dont forget! Buy ham early!!!

reminder:
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Actors and singers share their thoughts about Christmas

BY JOCELYN VALLE

WHAT are your memories of Christmas when you were a kid? When did you stop believing in Santa Claus? Has the meaning of Christmas changed since your childhood? What does it mean to you now? Some actors and singers share their answers:

Assunta De Rossi

"*Sa* Italy where I grew up, *sobrang* traditional *ang* celebration *ng* Christmas, as in *magsasabit ng* stockings then you write a letter, and on Christmas Day, you receive a gift. *Ginagawa namin 'yun dati,* every year.

"*Nang magpunta kami rito, hindi na namin na*-practice *'yan. Bigla na lang natigil.* Honestly, *mas nag*-enjoy *ako sa* Italy *kapag* Christmas *kesa dito. Mas* feel *ang* Christmas *doon kasi nga* winter *tapos totoong puno 'yung* Christmas tree *namin.* After nine years *dito, ngayon lang kami nakapag*-decorate.

"*Hindi pa rin naman nagbabago ang* meaning *ng* Christmas *para sa akin.* It's still about giving and forgiving. I don't expect to receive any gifts, and I don't really have the time to celebrate because I'm always working. *Iniisip ko na lang na araw-araw ay* Pasko.

"*Kaya* if I could ask Santa Claus for one gift, *siguro* vacation at my dad's place in Italy. I haven't been there since 1994."

Jaya

"I grew up not really knowing what Christmas was all about because my family wasn't really close. I'd say my mom and I were close, but *'yung* Christmas *namin, hindi* typical. I only found out about Santa Claus and all when we moved to America in 1985, when I was 15.

"*Sa* States *naman, iba ang* celebration. *Masaya.* You have a meal *na parang noche buena, tapos* you drink eggnog then you sit around and talk about what happened to you within the year.

"*Naniniwala ako na may* Santa Claus but it's more of a miraculous image. It can be your father, it can be an angel, it can be a disguise. *Ako kasi naka*-experience *ng milagro* one Christmas Eve *pero sa akin na lang 'yun*! It was really, really nice. I made a wish and it came true—that's why I'm here in the Philippines!

"This year's Christmas, I'll spend it with the Gibbs family (Janno, Bing and their kids). They will adopt me on Christmas Day. *Marami rin akong pupuntahang mga bahay* like *'yung sa mga katrabaho ko sa* 'SOP' *Kaya lang, naka*-braces *na ako* by that time, so *iga*-grind *ko na lang 'yung balat ng lechon para matikman ko naman ang* Christmas.

"The meaning of Christmas hasn't changed for me. I never believed that Christmas was about material stuff. The best you can give is your time. You can go to all the places where you can be your true self. It's not about receiving gifts. As a matter of fact, I tell people not to give me anything. I tell them to give it to someone else, a group of people or children, who are in need of a gift. *Kasi* OK *lang ako.*"

Leni Rivera

"I think, for every child, the best part about Christmas is the gift-giving. Of course that was true for me, too. Our family tradition was to go to midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, go to bed afterwards, and then my brother, sister and I would excitedly wake up early, force our parents out of bed, and rush to the Christmas tree to see what Santa had left for us. It's that spirit of family and the special bond that we shared every Christmas morning that I remember the most.

RIVERA. Wonderful memories of midnight Mass and *noche buena*.

"To be honest, I don't think I've ever stopped believing in Santa Claus. When I was maybe six or seven, I found out there was no actual round, jolly fellow who came to deliver presents to our house, and of course, I was disappointed.

"But every single year, even until now, whenever my mom gives me Christmas presents, she signs them 'Love, Santa.' So I guess my image of Santa Claus changed from a man in red, to the spirit of love and giving.

Carlo Orosa

"Excited! I'd always wake up early to find out if Santa had something for me. My mom and dad would always tell me the night before Christmas that Santa would only come if I sleep early. So I did!

"*Binisto ng kuya ko noong mga* 7 or 8 years old *ako.* He saw our mom and dad put the presents under the tree one Christmas Eve and that was it!

"Particularly in this time of crisis and war, many are hopeless and afraid. But I remember clearly God's first message through the angels and the shepherds after Christ was born. His message was peace on earth and goodwill to all men.

"God's desire was to bring peace and good will to us all and He did so by sending the Prince of Peace himself, Jesus Christ. Remembering that makes me feel very secure living in these times."

Jamie Rivera

"I remember going to midnight Mass with my parents. Opening our gifts at midnight after *noche buena*, and going to our *ninongs* and *ninangs* for *aguinaldo* and collecting new bills (money).

"Our eldest sister told us that there was no Santa Claus—because she was the assistant of my mommy in putting the money inside our socks!

ACTORS/ P. E4

CRUISE and Diaz share a romantic moment.

Tom Cruise . . .

(From page E1)

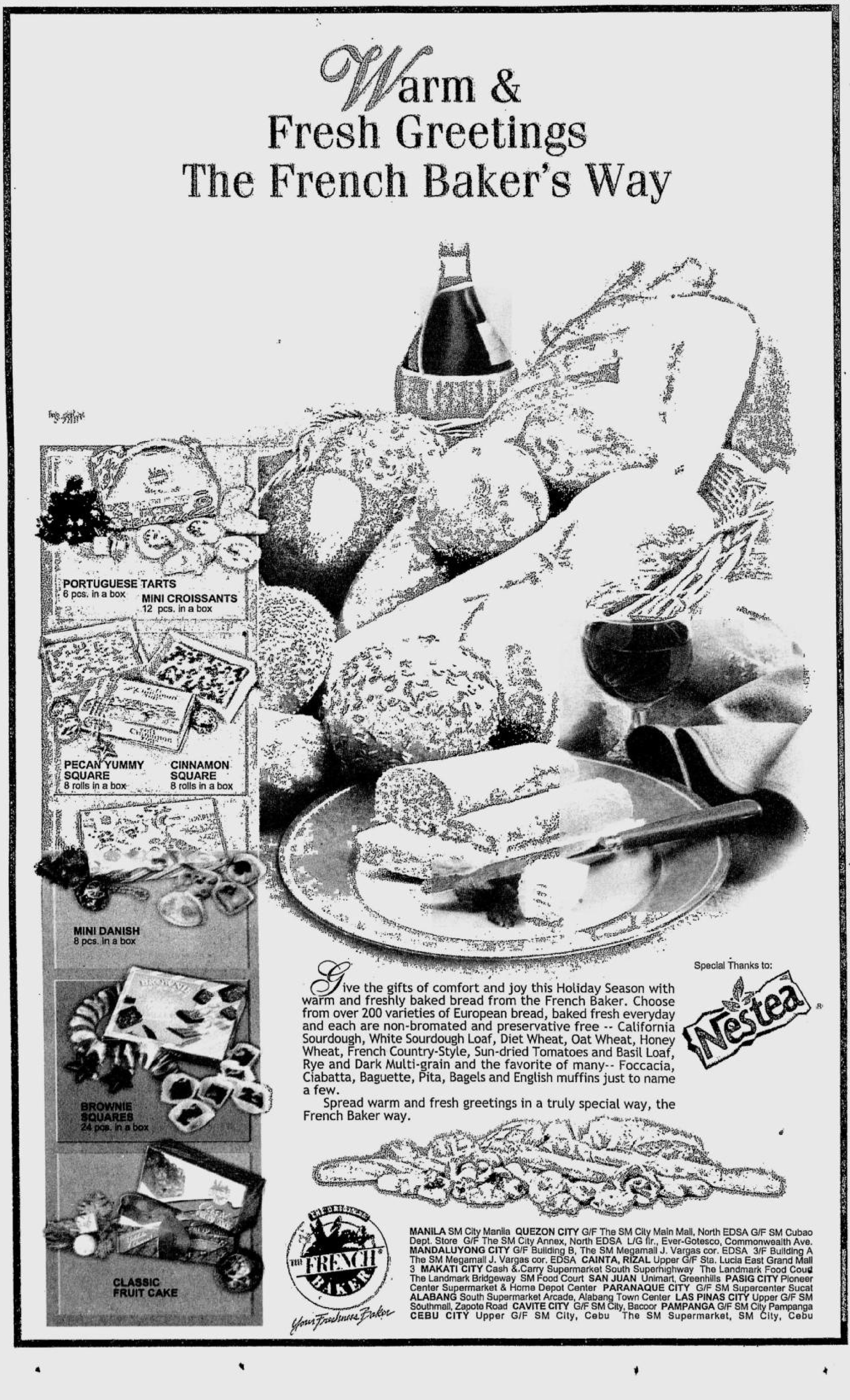
film is his journey of self-awakening. It's the price that he pays for being careless with other people's feeling," Cruise explains.

Cameron Diaz co-stars with Cruise in "Vanilla Sky." She was ranked No. 80 in the top 101 list of Entertainment Weekly. With "Charlie's Angels'" box-office grosses, this kick-ass Hollywood blond has a $12 million payday. Diaz's choice of films was able to balance her mainstream blockbusters ("There's Something About Mary") with artier and sometimes inaccessible forays in indie films ("Being John Malkovich).

In "Vanilla Sky," Diaz plays Julie Gianni, who is a vulnerable woman despite her outward assurance and allure. She finds herself in a precarious emotional position common to many women. "Julie is the good-time girl, the one who always knows how to make people, especially guys, comfortable without any pressure.

"But that isn't enough for her anymore, especially once she meets David Aames and falls in love with him. They don't make that commitment to one another, and at first, that's fine. But when we meet Julie in the film, she's trying to define the direction of the relationship, and that affects everything in her life."

FROM left, Cruise, Crowe and Penelope Cruz.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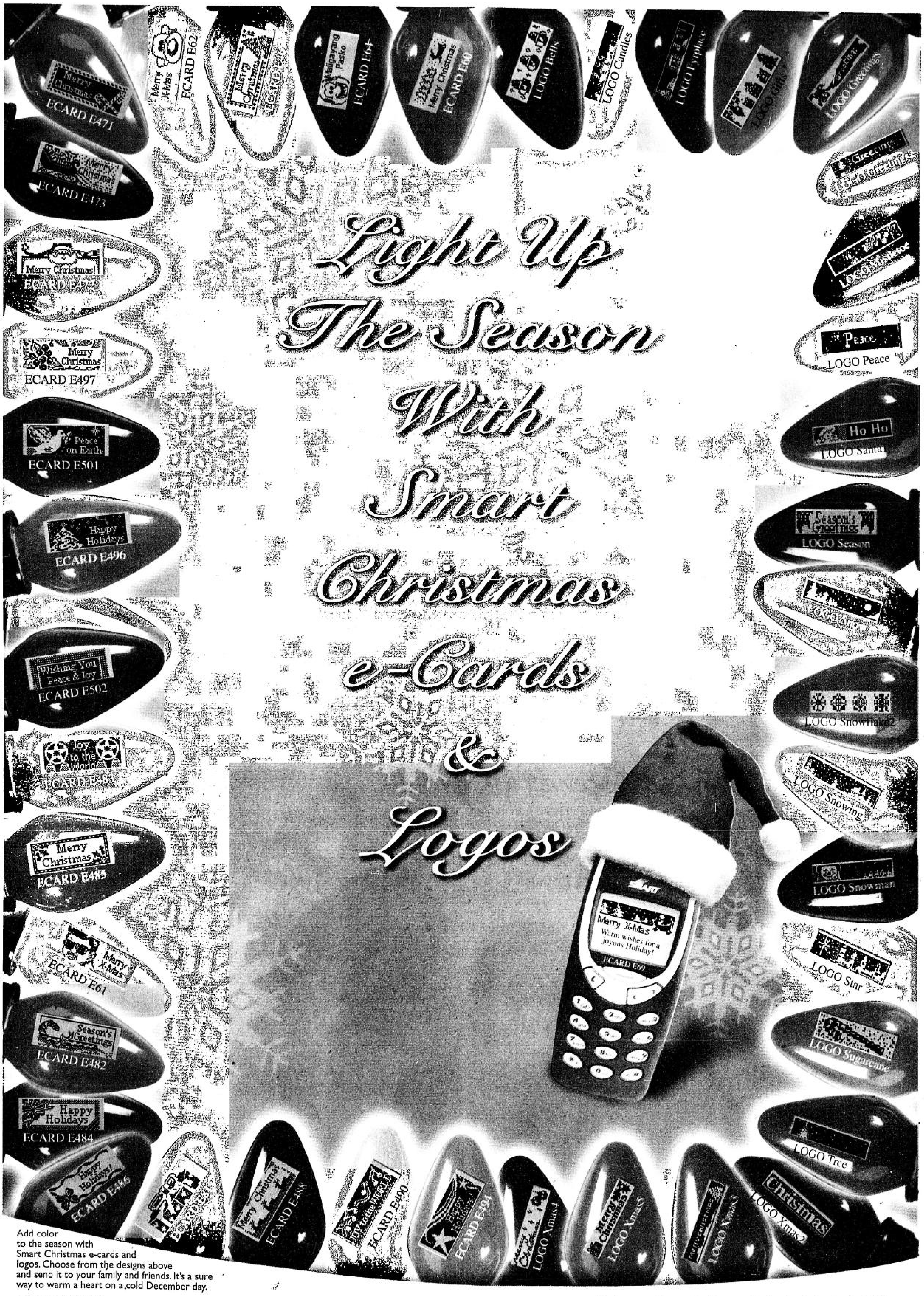
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LOGO Snowing
LOGO Snowman
LOGO Star
LOGO Sugarcane
LOGO Tree
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<keyword> and send 233.
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WOLFPAC

SMART
Simply Amazing!

I remember Jograd, Isay and Angelique

By Nestor U. Torre

I'VE been directing plays, musicals, TV shows and films for many years now, and in all that time, some of my brightest memories are about the outstanding young talents I directed when they were still newcomers.

Most of them, I first met during auditions, so it was their talent that spoke loudly and clearly on their behalf. Some others were my friends and colleagues in theater, so I knew that they more than deserved the bigger showcase that TV and film could provide.

Newcomers

Why did I like working with newcomers when some other directors preferred the box-office insurance that big stars provided? It must have been because I had my own roots in acting, and when I started out, I was helped by some established theater people to get my big breaks early in my career.

Having had a relatively easy time of it due to their help, I simply wanted to "pay it forward" to the next generations of talents. Of course, my hope is that, when my new talents go places, they will in turn help other newcomers get the breaks they deserve.

The first musical I directed was "Jesus Christ Superstar in Filipino," with big names like Rico J. Puno and Celeste Legaspi headlining. But I made it a point to cast two talented unknowns, Robert Encila and Robert Armonio, alternating in the plum role of Jesus Christ.

The two Roberts got rave reviews, but chose to continue their performing careers abroad—Armonio as a rocker in Japan, and Encila as a balladeer performing for the Hilton chain of hotels in the States (he even cut an album some years ago).

Showcase

Next, I did the original Filipino musical "Magsimula Ka," and it proved to be a particularly great showcase for new talents because I decided to have an all-newcomer cast. Since the musical became a big hit that ran for more than a hundred performances, it provided its young cast many opportunities to keep honing their talents.

In fact, there have been four different productions of "Magsimula Ka" through the years, so four times as many newcomers were able to benefit from its challenging showcase.

Perhaps because they were able to perform the show so often, some of the musical's young stalwarts went on to strong careers in entertainment, and some of them are still very much around.

The first cast member to make it was singer-dancer-comedian Jograd dela Torre, who later performed with Kuh Ledesma and was a regular on Nora Aunor's weekly TV variety-musical show. Jograd has his own band now and has revinvented himself in the rocker mode.

The leading lady of "Magsimula Ka," Isay Alvarez, impressed audiences with her singing, dancing and acting skills, as well as her obvious love for performing.

ALVAREZ. Obvious love for performing.

LAZO. Beautiful soprano voice.

JOGRAD (left) with German Moreno and Nora Aunor on her "Superstar" TV show.

She went on to become the first singer-actress to play Gigi in "Miss Saigon," in the hit musical's original production in London.

European TV

Isay stayed with the popular musical for years, further honing her performing ability and learning a lot from the world-class shows she saw all over Europe. She also acted in a drama for European television and other productions.

Coming home, she joined a number of local productions, but left every now and then to fulfill performing commitments abroad. At present, Isay is a member of the popular musical-comedy quartet, the Angfourgettables.

Angelique Lazo is better known to televiewers as a newscaster, but she first made her mark as a performer in another Filipino musical I directed, "Awit ni Kadugnung." She was tall, lovely, dusky and had a soprano voice that blew audiences away.

Roles

We were so taken with Angelique that we cast her in several other productions, always making sure that her roles provided good showcases for her admirable combination of attributes.

Alas, despite her abiding love for performance, Angelique got much busier with TV work, until it required all of her time and attention. But we're still hoping that she can "do theater" sometime next year.

So, for that matter, should Jograd, Isay and all the other outstanding talents who started in local musical-theater productions but have gone on to other concerns and endeavors.

Nothing like a Filipino Christmas

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

I HAVE spent four or five Christmases outside the country, and I have come to the conclusion that, when it comes to the Christmas spirit, there is nothing like what we have at home. The weather is just perfect. To many of us, it is sweater weather in the evenings, and cool days are spent in jampacked malls and shopping centers. The fast food outlets are also rocking.

Futile endeavor

Parties and office gatherings are everyday happenings where dieting is a futile endeavor. It is best to include it in our coming New Year's resolutions—which many of us break anyway, after about two weeks.

In other countries, everyone is also busy shopping. Malls are also jampacked and you cut your own Christrmas tree. But what is it that makes our Christmas so special? It is the smell of early morning *bibingka* and *puto bungbong*. It is the caroling of small boys with their empty cans with stones, who at times sound like they're reciting a poem. It is also the good, old *parol*.

Parties

And of course there are the parties at home that start around the 15th, all the way up to New Year's Eve. Our get-togethers are much grander and food overflows. Our family is also around to share that joy. These are what make our Christmases different.

But, wherever you are, whatever you do, please don't forget that it is because of God's love that we celebrate Christmas. And the greatest gift He has given us is His Son, Jesus. Accepting that gift is what will give us everlasting joy!

Merry Christmas and a most prosperous New Year!
Talk to you next year.
Happy Eating!

Actors . . .

(From page E2)

"Christmas has become even more meaningful to me now because I have become Santa Claus to my child. I have realized the meaning of the old phrase: 'It is better to give than to receive.' "

Michael Flores

"My siblings and I used to put socks under the Christmas tree. *Nagka*-caroling *din ako* with my brothers and friends *sa* subdivision *namin*. Once, *nag*-showdown *kami* with another caroling group. *May dala silang* cassette *tapos pagalingan kami sa pagsasayaw. Nakakatawa*—caroling, *biglang nagsayawan! Pero ang saya namin noon.*

Leo Martinez

"Christmas was always in Balayan. It was a time for *castañas, puto bumbong*, carolling, *puto at kuchinta, hamon, queso de bola* and on Christmas Day we (brothers, sisters and about 15 cousins) went to all the houses of our *ninong* and *ninang*, aunts and uncles plus *lolos* and *lolas* who would all give us money and we had to eat and drink something at every stop. We would go home with a big bundle!

"I was never into Santa Claus. We never received gift-wrapped presents in those days. Our Santas were our *ninongs* who gave us money. Instead of 'opening of gifts,' we had 'counting of money.' And lots of food!

Karylle

"I believe in the spirit of Santa Claus *na* always present in a lot of people who give gifts. It doesn't have to be one person, it could be a lot of people. I'd always be the one to ask for gifts. I'd always put it in my stockings. Now, my friends from high school and I just agree to give cards with long letters and the money that would have been spent for gifts will do a good deed for other people.

"My mom (Zsa Zsa Padilla) usually gives me a phone. This year, *inunahan ko na siya*. I've asked her to give me a pair of reading glasses instead. I usually get her Powderpuff Girls stuff because she likes cartoons. Or something I'll make on my computer since I just got a scanner."

Mga Bata ay liligaya
Dahil sa Araneta Center
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SWITCHING CHANNELS

Ana Capri tries comedy on RPN-9

By Edmund L. Sicam

THE TROUBLE with being a good *contravida* in a TV soap is that eventually the character gets eased out of the show so that the audience can have its pound of flesh and derive satisfaction from the triumph of good over evil.

That's probably what happened to Ana Capri who got bumped off from GMA's "Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin." The actress who, along with Klaudia Koronel and Hazel Espinosa, starred in the controversial "Live Show" has set her sights on non-bold roles after doing a good job on movies like "Pila Balde" and "Sa Parasio ni Efren."

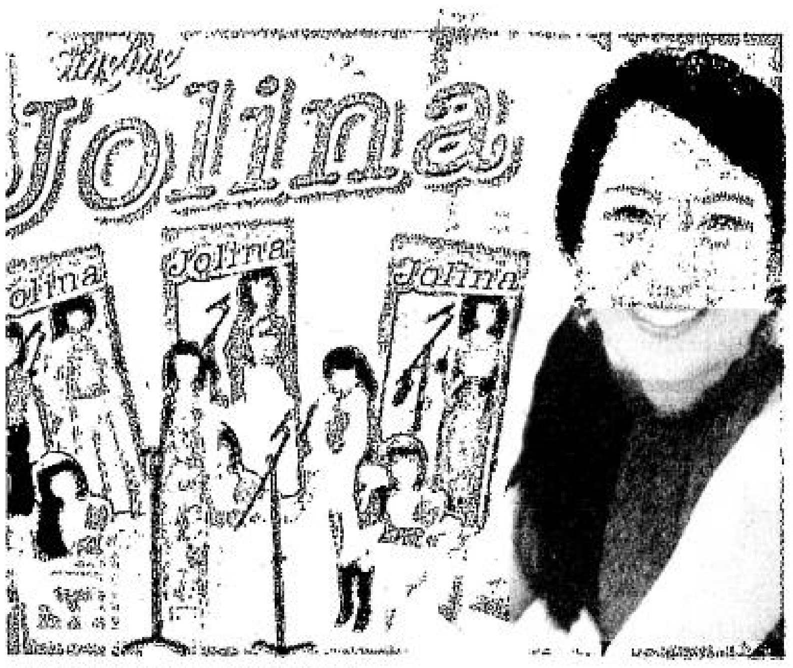
Her TV appearances are part of her attempts to create a new image. She has proven herself to be a competent actress, having won in last year's Cinemanila Filmfest, so she's looking for assignments that can bring out her thespic skills.

We bumped into her at the presscon for "Di Kita Ma-Reach," where she plays a GRO out to seduce leading man Mikey Arroyo. She feels like she's starting all over again after getting used to taking her clothes off in lots of bold movies. "*Para akong nasa* Grade Two *ngayon*," says Ana. "*Marami na naman akong dapat pag-daanan bago ako grumaduate.*"

February next year, Ana will star in another soap, this time for RPN-9. It's going to be a big departure for her since the role calls for her to be funny. That should be a real test of her versatility.

Ana has just returned from a two-week vacation in the US. We asked her if she had a problem getting a visa since she was young and single, the kind that visa officers usually reject. Ana said she had smooth sailing during the interview. She made it a point to bring her portfolio, which included press clippings and other promo materials.

As far as her love life is concerned, everything's fine but she has no plans to settle down. Her boyfriend is a successful businessman so she can live comfortably without working as hard. However, Ana feels she needs to earn some more so she can contribute to the partnership. She doesn't want to be dependent on her husband for support.



JOLINA and her singing dolls.

Jolina's new collection

Early this year, living doll Jolina Magdangal, a regular on ABS-CBN's "Arriba, Arriba," introduced a Barbie-type Jolina Doll collection, the kind that kids want to dress up with various accessories. According to her dad, Jun Magdangal, the collection was a big hit among Jolina's fans both here and abroad.

So, as a follow-up, Jun has decided to release a Jolina Singing Doll collection for the holiday season.

With the push of a button, fans will now be able to hear the young star sing excerpts from "Laging Tapat," a cut from her self-titled album, which became a quintuple platinum album, selling more than 200,000 copies to date.

Jolina launched her new collection recently. This year. Jolina spent a lot of time doing concerts abroad so she has neglected her movie career. The last movie she did for Star Cinema still has to be released.

In 2002, Jolina intends to devote more time to making movies. Jun says there are offers that he is now considering and promises that Jolina will be more visible on the big screen.

MTV and Penshoppe search

MTV Philippines and Penshoppe have just launched a nationwide search for five guys and five girls who will form the MTV and Penshoppe Youth Council. The ten are supposed to personify the organizers' personality and spirit—young, hip, energetic, creative and fun-loving yet responsible.

MTV marketing and communications director Rod Nepomuceno says they're looking for "role models for today's youth." The Council will be official ambassadors to the schools.

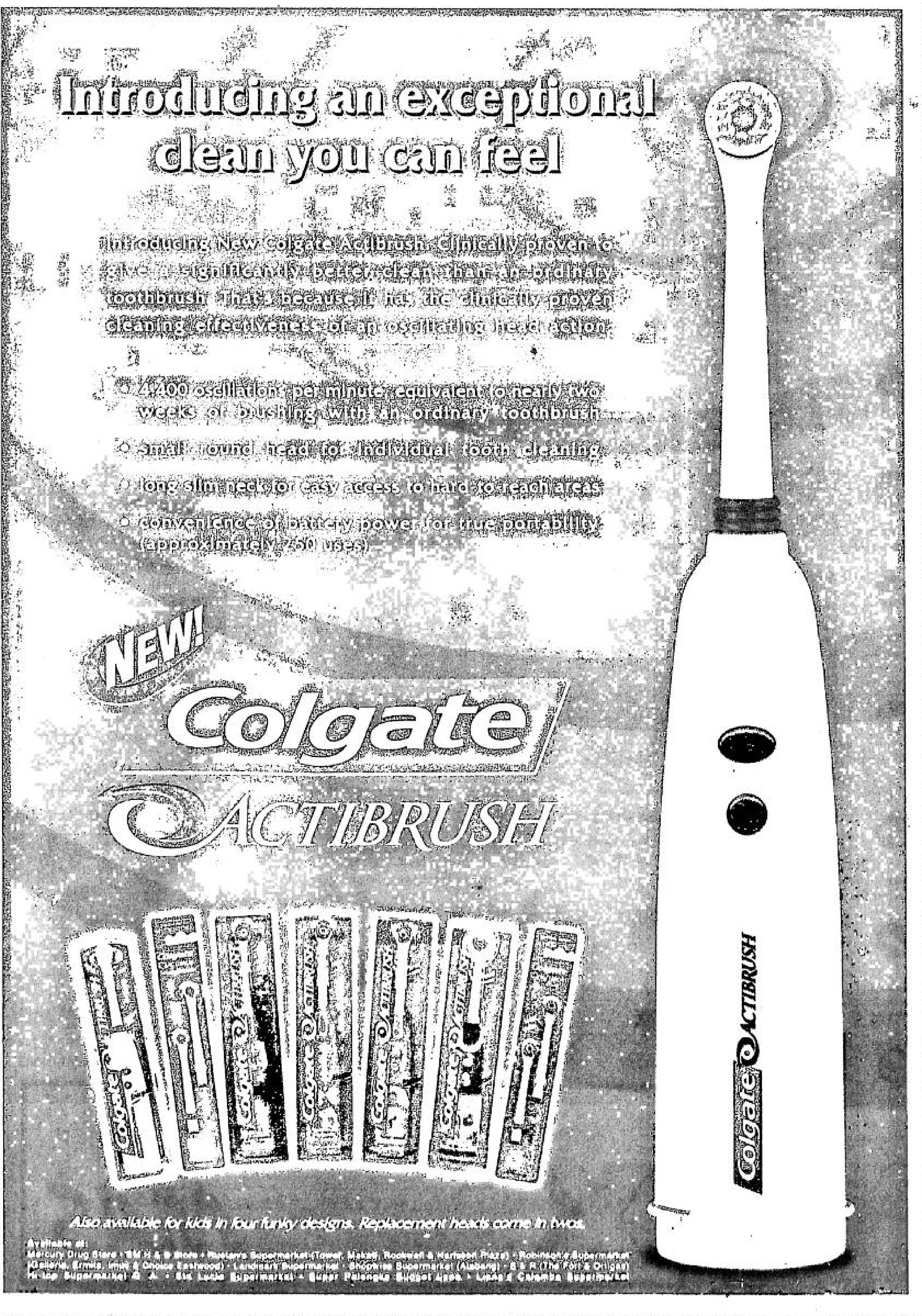
Winners will be VIP hosts at MTV's events and, if qualified, could be roving reporters for the music channel. Some will be awarded modeling contracts from Penshoppe.

To qualify, candidates must be 14 to 20 years old, bona fide students in high school or college levels or actively pursuing studies in DECS-approved programs. Applications will be distributed to various schools.

Interested applicants can also submit a biodata stating their name, age, address, school, year level, course, sex, parents' names and contact numbers and a three-sentence paragraph explaining why they feel they are qualified to be part of the council. They should mail their applications to: MTV and Penshoppe Youth Council Search, P.O. Box 1696, Makati Central Post Office, 156 Makati City.

Applications will be accepted until Feb. 8, 2002. Twenty finalists will be chosen on Feb. 15, 2002 and the winners will be announced on Feb. 28, 2002.

For inquiries, call 848-1321.



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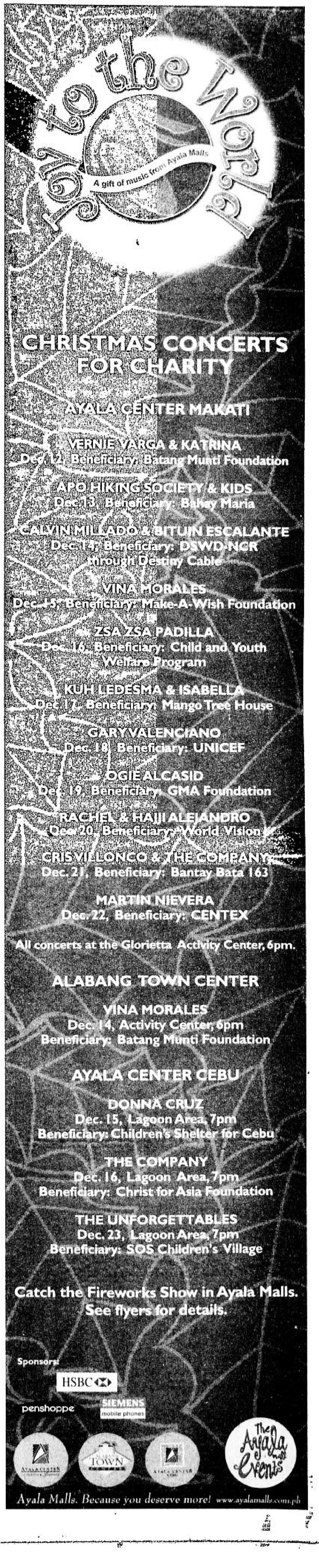

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APO HIKING SOCIETY & KIDS
Dec. 13, Beneficiary: Bahay Maria

CALVIN MILLADO & BITUIN ESCALANTE
Dec. 14, Beneficiary: DSWD-NCR through Destiny Cable

VINA MORALES
Dec. 15, Beneficiary: Make-A-Wish Foundation

ZSA ZSA PADILLA
Dec. 16, Beneficiary: Child and Youth Welfare Program

KUH LEDESMA & ISABELLA
Dec. 17, Beneficiary: Mango Tree House

GARY VALENCIANO
Dec. 18, Beneficiary: UNICEF

OGIE ALCASID
Dec. 19, Beneficiary: GMA Foundation

RACHEL & HAJJI ALEJANDRO
Dec. 20, Beneficiary: World Vision

CRIS VILLONCO & THE COMPANY
Dec. 21, Beneficiary: Bantay Bata 163

MARTIN NIEVERA
Dec. 22, Beneficiary: CENTEX

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ALABANG TOWN CENTER

VINA MORALES
Dec. 14, Activity Center, 6pm
Beneficiary: Batang Munti Foundation

AYALA CENTER CEBU

DONNA CRUZ
Dec. 15, Lagoon Area, 7pm
Beneficiary: Children's Shelter for Cebu

THE COMPANY
Dec. 16, Lagoon Area, 7pm
Beneficiary: Christ for Asia Foundation

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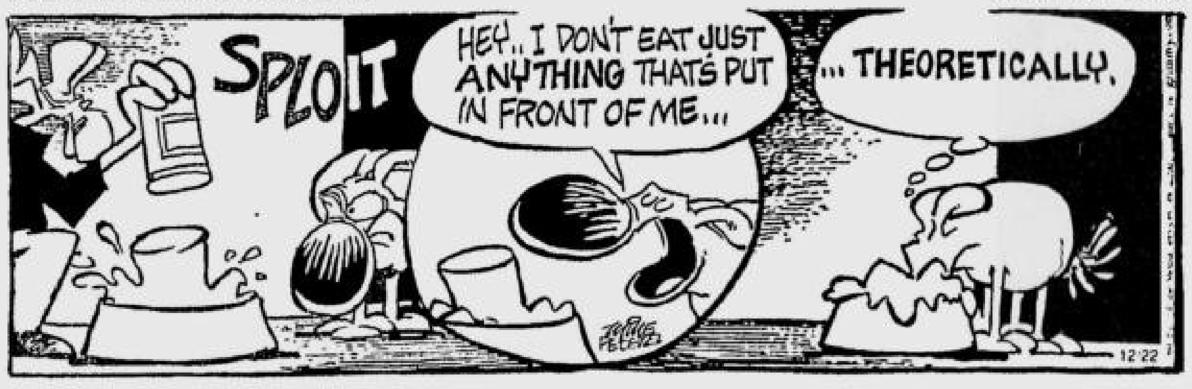
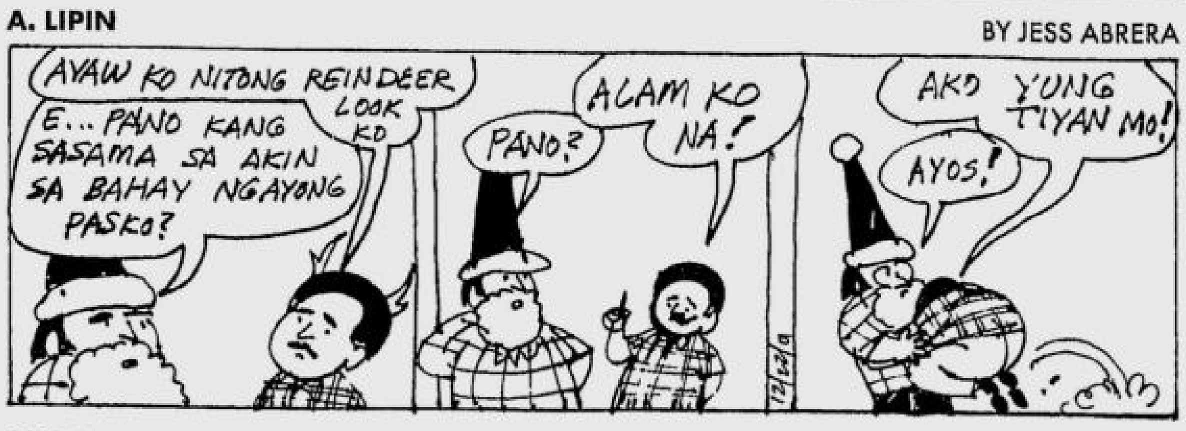
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


SPLOIT
HEY.. I DON'T EAT JUST ANYTHING THAT'S PUT IN FRONT OF ME...
... THEORETICALLY.
12-22

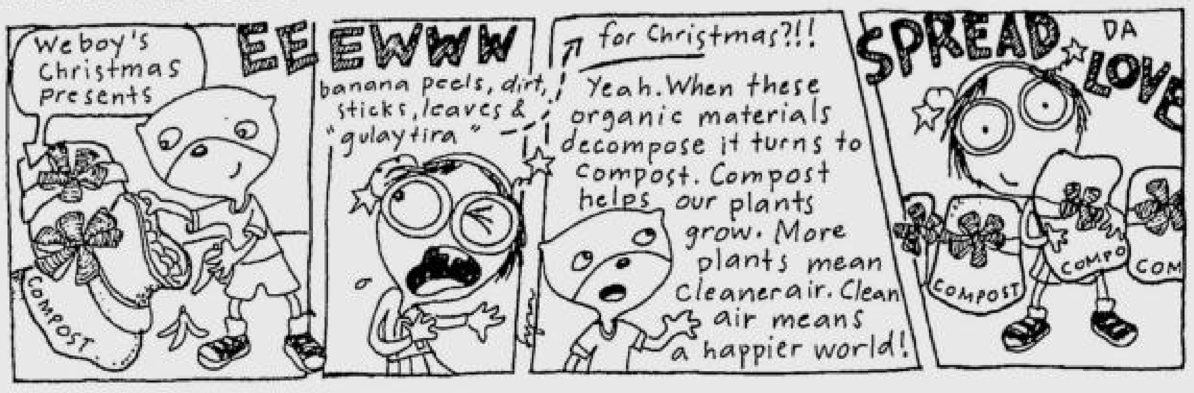
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


AYAW KO NITONG REINDEER LOOK KO
E... PANO KANG SASAMA SA AKIN SA BAHAY NGAYONG PASKO?
PANO?
ALAM KO NA!
AKO YUNG TIYAN MO!
AYOS!

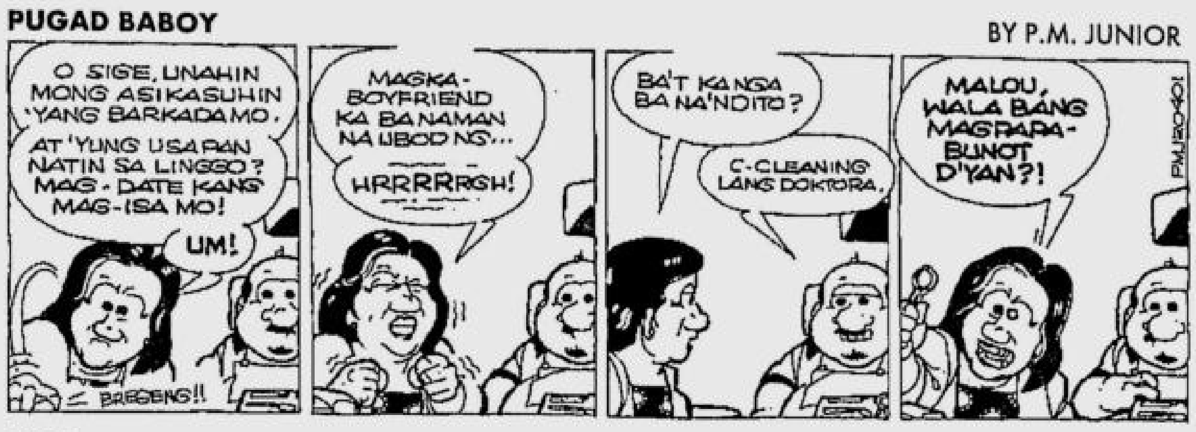
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Weboy's Christmas presents
COMPOST
EEEWWW
banana peels, dirt, sticks, leaves & "gulaytira"
for Christmas?!!
Yeah. When these organic materials decompose it turns to compost. Compost helps our plants grow. More plants mean cleaner air. Clean air means a happier world!
SPREAD DA LOVE
COMPOST
COMPO
COM

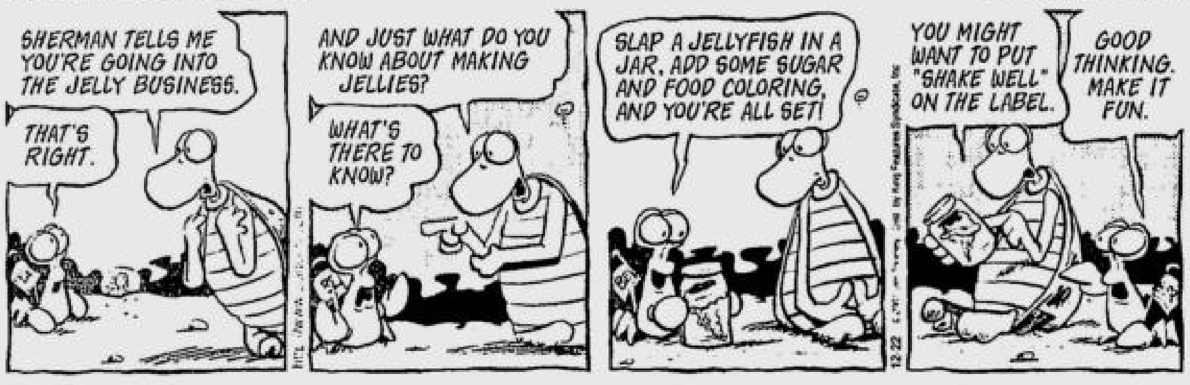
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O SIGE, UNAHIN MONG ASIKASUHIN 'YANG BARKADA MO.
AT 'YUNG USAPAN NATIN SA LINGGO? MAG-DATE KANG MAG-ISA MO!
UM!
BREGENG!!
MAGKA-BOYFRIEND KA BA NAMAN NA UBOD NG...
HRRRRRGH!
BA'T KANGA BA NA'NDITO?
C-CLEANING LANG DOKTORA.
MALOU, WALA BANG MAGPAPA-BUNOT D'YAN?!

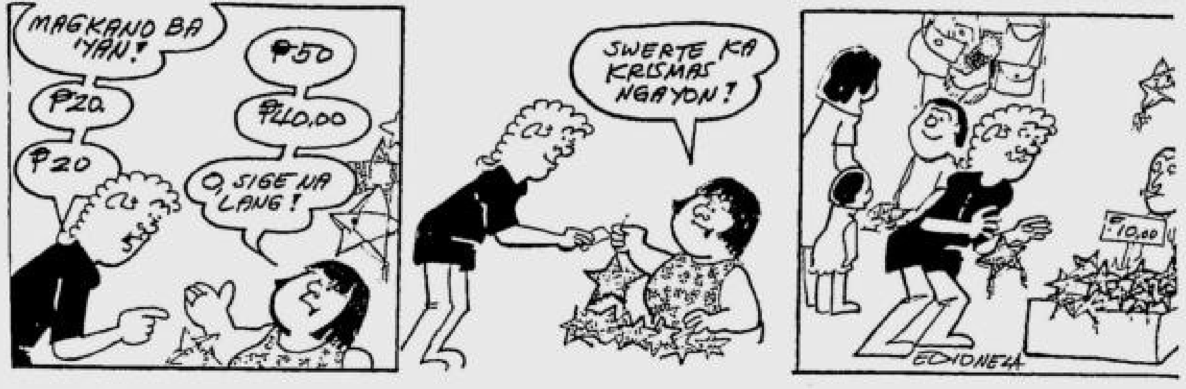
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


SHERMAN TELLS ME YOU'RE GOING INTO THE JELLY BUSINESS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
AND JUST WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MAKING JELLIES?
WHAT'S THERE TO KNOW?
SLAP A JELLYFISH IN A JAR, ADD SOME SUGAR AND FOOD COLORING, AND YOU'RE ALL SET!
YOU MIGHT WANT TO PUT "SHAKE WELL" ON THE LABEL.
GOOD THINKING. MAKE IT FUN.
12-22

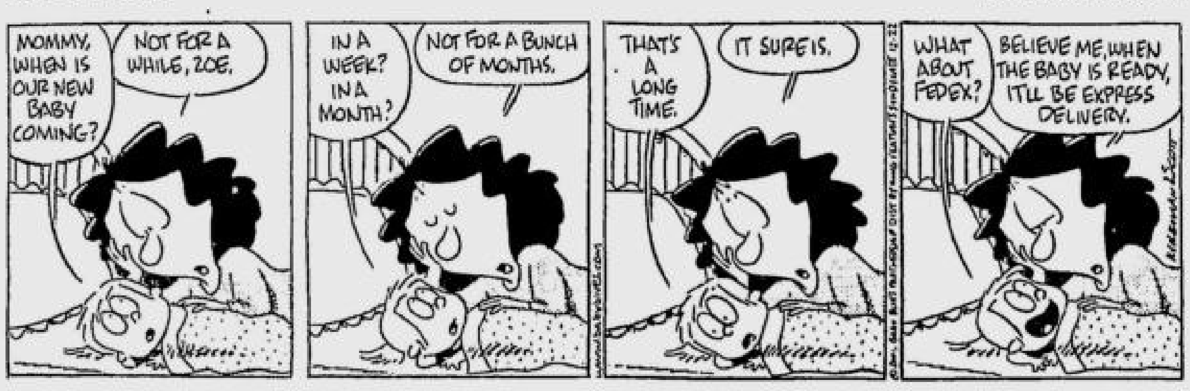
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


MAGKANO BA 'YAN?
₱20
₱20
₱50
₱40.00
O, SIGE NA LANG!
SWERTE KA KRISMAS NGAYON?
₱10.00
EDIONELA

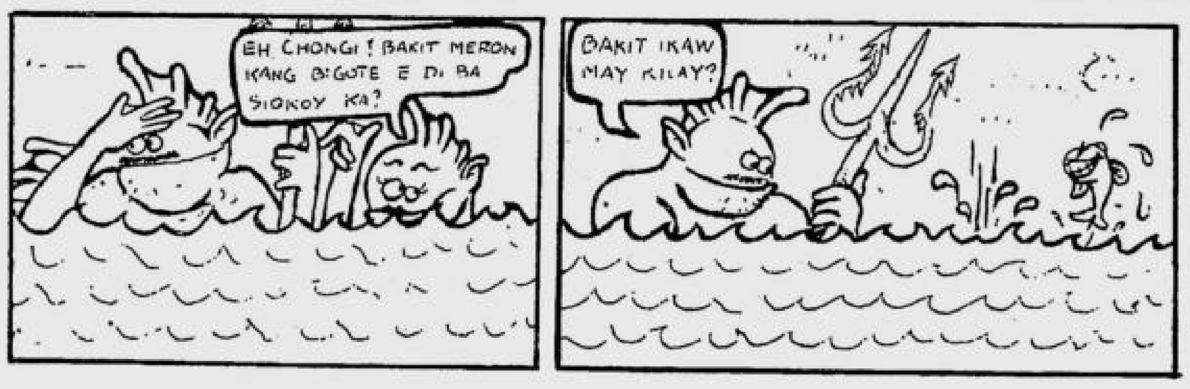
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOMMY, WHEN IS OUR NEW BABY COMING?
NOT FOR A WHILE, ZOE.
IN A WEEK? IN A MONTH?
NOT FOR A BUNCH OF MONTHS.
THAT'S A LONG TIME.
IT SURE IS.
WHAT ABOUT FEDEX?
BELIEVE ME, WHEN THE BABY IS READY, IT'LL BE EXPRESS DELIVERY.

CHICHOY CHOKOY

BY IKOY RICIO


EH CHONG! BAKIT MERON KANG BIGOTE E DI BA SIOKOY KA?
BAKIT IKAW MAY KILAY?

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Diane Sawyer, Robin Gibb, Maurice Gibb, Steve Garvey

Happy Birthday: You can finally get on with the things you've wanted to do for so long. Lots of opportunities will be present and the wherewithal to complete what you start will bring you the praise and recognition you've been trying to achieve for some time now. Your numbers are 11, 13, 28, 31, 35, 42

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't let anyone take advantage of your generosity or kindness today. Sort out your priorities. A change of job may be in order.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Re-evaluate your life and your direction and consider how you can turn things around in the New Year. It's time to start deciding what your resolution will be for 2002.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You may be in a carefree mood but you stand to lose if you gamble. Your financial obligations may put a damper on plans for this festive season.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Someone around you may not be telling you everything. To force issues now would only lead to arguments. Confront him or her once things settle down again.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You will cause hard feelings if you are too colorful or dramatic at family gatherings. Listen and you will find any event you attend informative.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't spend too much on children or friends. They'll be just as happy if you give them an abundance of old-fashioned love.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You will have problems with friends and family if you haven't been helping out enough. Take the initiative and get the ball rolling.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Keep your thoughts to yourself and don't indulge in gossip. Don't get confused while en route. Make sure you have good directions before you start out.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will be up for a surprise if you haven't added up all the money you've been spending lately. Tighten your purse strings and prepare to pay off your debts.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Work a little longer or a little harder. You will be anxious if you haven't gotten all your chores out of the way. This is the season to be jolly.

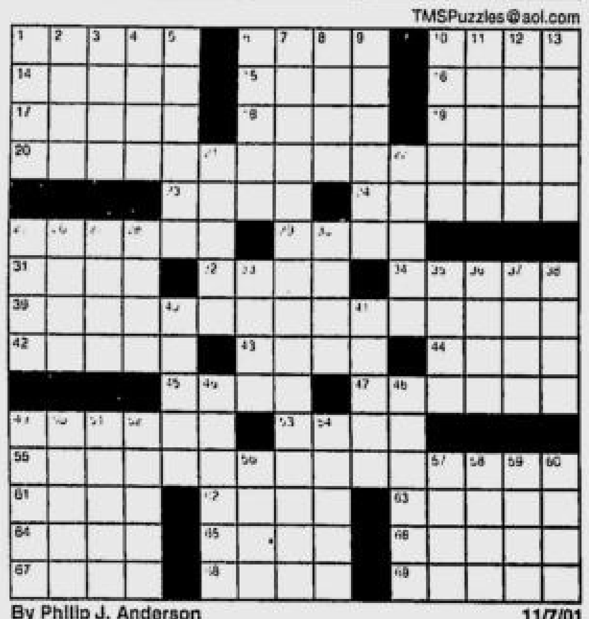
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Someone you least expect may be trying to undermine you. Be careful not to give him or her any reason to spread rumors or make you look bad.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): It's time to take a reality check. You may be hanging out with some rather dubious characters. You stand to lose money as well as possessions if you aren't careful.

Birthday Baby: You are curious, determined and always ready to compete with anyone who challenges you. You have strong values and ethics.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

11/7/01

ACROSS
1 Clan pattern
6 French clergyman
10 Flutter
14 Guarded comment
15 Bankruptcy
16 Incarnation of Vishnu
17 Christmas tune
18 Monster of the Mojave?
19 No holds barred
20 Three homes
23 Knotted
24 Prevailing movements
25 Brunel's island
29 "Lohengrin" lady
31 Melange
32 Garr or Hatcher
34 Fired
39 Three homes
42 Orchid tuber
43 Toward shelter
44 Org. with headquarters in Brussels
45 Normandy town
47 Laboratory jar
49 Captivate
53 Bordeaux black
55 Three homes
61 Anthracite, e.g.
62 Saturn and Mercury
63 City on the Missouri
64 Bypass
65 Pin box
66 Kitchen gadget
67 Canisters
68 M. Descartes
69 Main Street structure

DOWN
1 Special-interest grps.
2 Would-be atty.'s hurdle
3 Well ventilated
4 Religious statue
5 Wipe from memory
6 Quibble
7 Three homes
8 Digestive juice
9 Passes into law
10 Wharton character
11 French rabbit
12 Make minor alterations
13 Emotional twinges
21 Unrestrained outbreaks
22 Verbal exams
25 Hits on the head
26 Earthenware crock
27 Money of Iran
28 Jot down
30 Merchandise category
33 & others
35 Volcano in Sicily
36 Yellowish-brown wood
37 Fence break
38 Scent
40 __ salts
41 Minus figure
46 Missing-persons investigator
48 Mistakes
49 Disney World attraction
50 Model Campbell
51 Once more
52 Runs in heat
54 Actor Davis
56 Social engagement
57 Send off
58 Mexican sandwich
59 "Silkwood" star
60 Rabbit's kin

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

P	A	L	E	■	O	C	H	E	R	■	P	E	E	L
I	R	O	N	■	D	H	O	L	E	■	O	T	T	O
C	A	N	D	I	D	A	T	E	S	■	L	O	U	S
A	B	E	■	M	E	T	■	G	E	M	I	N	I	S
■	■	■	E	A	R	T	H	I	E	S	T	■	■	■
P	S	A	L	M	■	Y	E	S	■	S	I	E	G	E
U	N	L	E	S	S	■	A	T	M	■	C	R	O	P
M	A	S	C	■	P	A	R	S	E	■	I	N	F	O
P	R	O	T	■	Y	E	T	■	A	B	A	S	E	D
S	E	P	I	A	■	R	E	G	■	E	N	T	R	E
■	■	■	O	C	E	A	N	A	U	T	S	■	■	■
E	M	I	N	E	N	T	■	M	R	T	■	S	P	A
L	A	R	D	■	V	O	T	E	G	E	T	T	E	R
L	I	M	A	■	O	R	A	T	E	■	W	A	L	T
S	L	A	Y	■	I	S	L	E	S	■	O	B	E	Y

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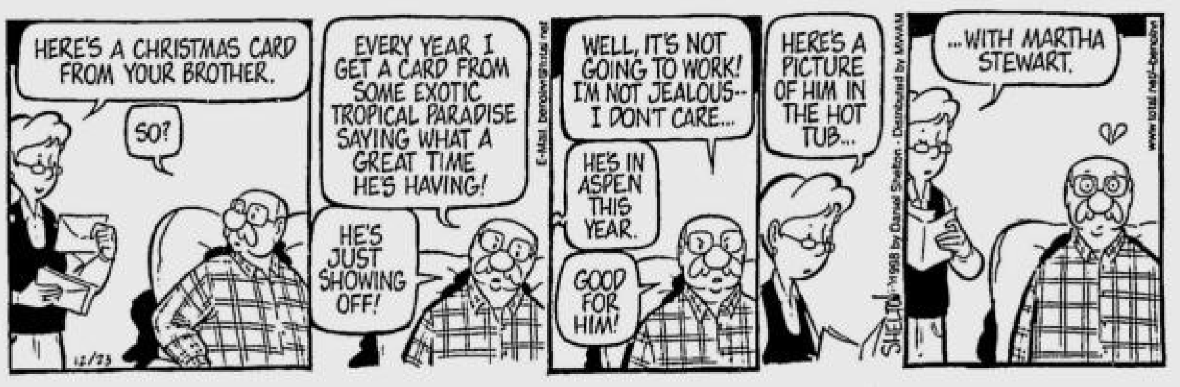
11/7/01

ANSWER ON MONDAY

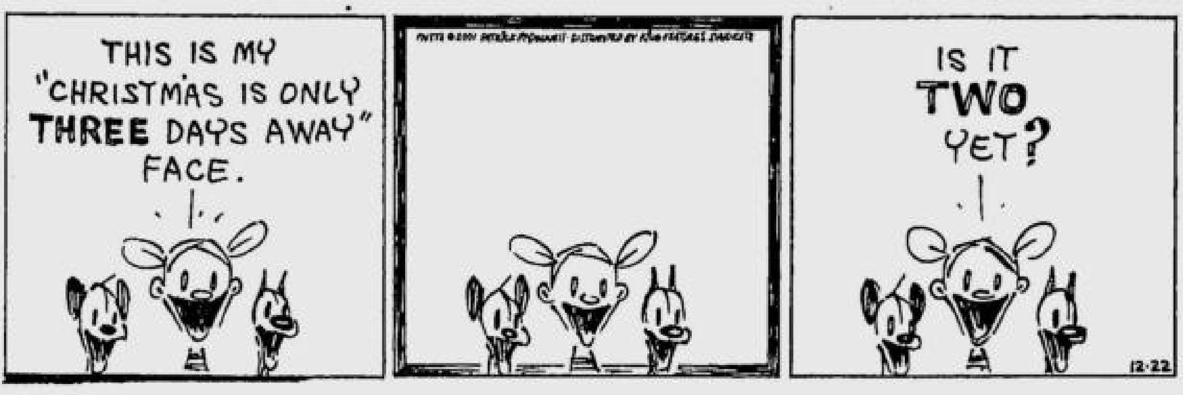
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HERE'S A CHRISTMAS CARD FROM YOUR BROTHER.
SO?
EVERY YEAR I GET A CARD FROM SOME EXOTIC TROPICAL PARADISE SAYING WHAT A GREAT TIME HE'S HAVING!
HE'S JUST SHOWING OFF!
WELL, IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK! I'M NOT JEALOUS-- I DON'T CARE...
HE'S IN ASPEN THIS YEAR.
GOOD FOR HIM!
HERE'S A PICTURE OF HIM IN THE HOT TUB...
...WITH MARTHA STEWART.
12/23

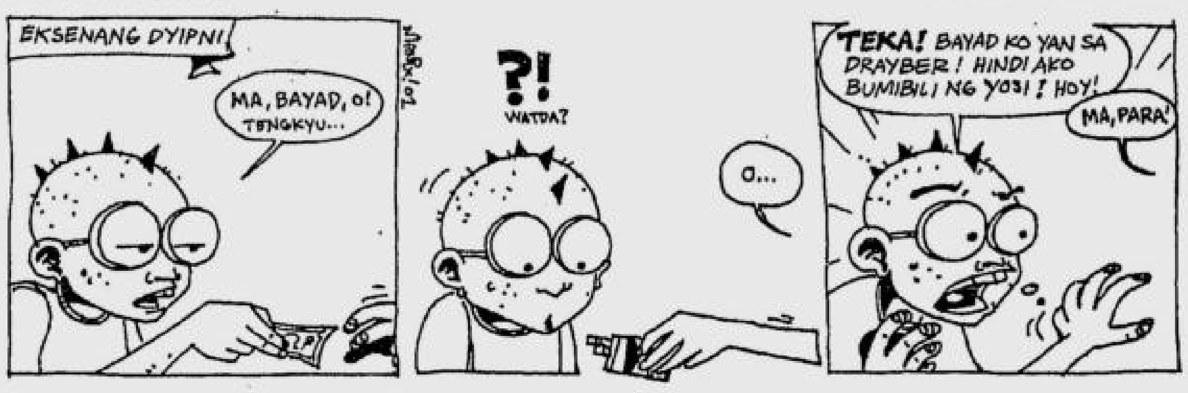
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THIS IS MY "CHRISTMAS IS ONLY THREE DAYS AWAY" FACE.
IS IT TWO YET?
12-22

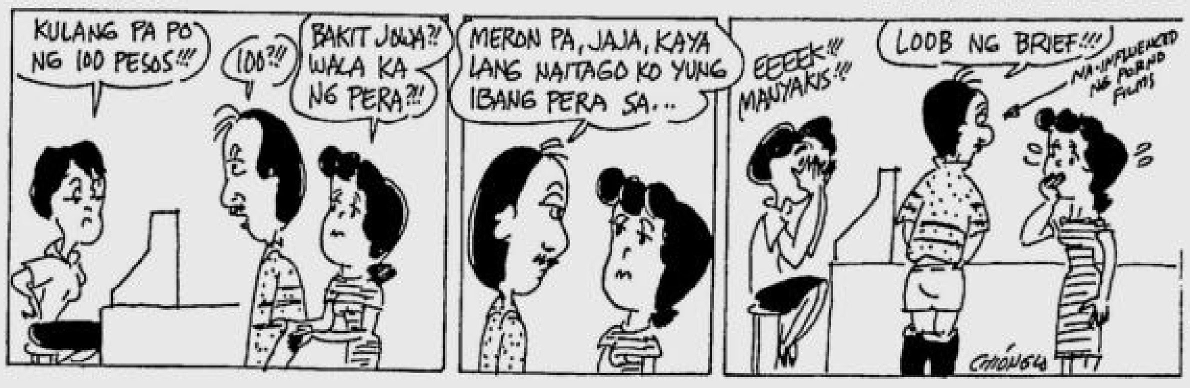
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


EKSENANG DYIPNI
MA, BAYAD, O! TENGKYU...
?!
WATDA?
O...
TEKA! BAYAD KO YAN SA DRAYBER! HINDI AKO BUMIBILI NG YOSI! HOY!
MA, PARA!

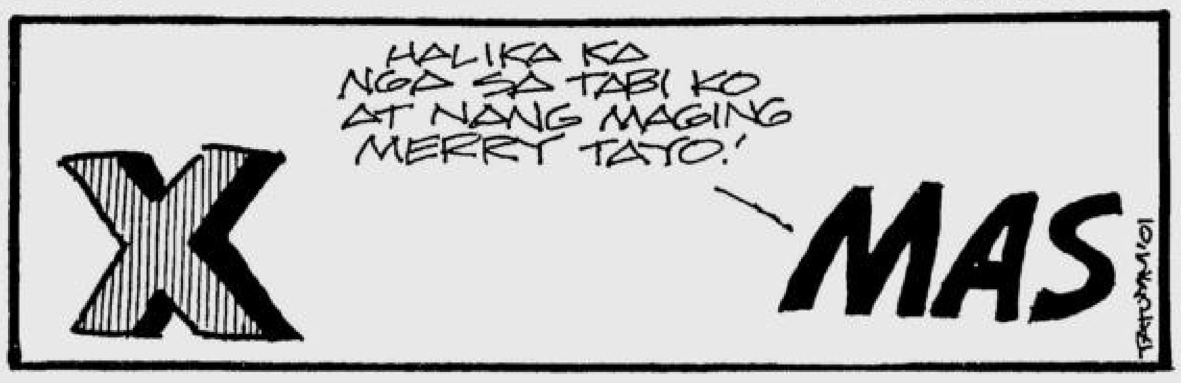
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


KULANG PA PO NG 100 PESOS!!!
100?!!
BAKIT JAJA?! WALA KA NG PERA?!!
MERON PA, JAJA, KAYA LANG NAITAGO KO YUNG IBANG PERA SA...
EEEEK!!! MANYAKIS!!!
LOOB NG BRIEF!!!
NA-INFLUENCED NG PORNO FILMS
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


HALIKA KA NGA SA TABI KO AT NANG MAGING MERRY TAYO!
X
MAS

Crisis before Christmas (Why me, Lord?)

BY JEANNE YOUNG

(Conclusion)

DING Bautista had earlier rung my old friend, Bishop Raul Martinez, in San Jose, Antique. "Bunny (that's me) needs your prayers."

"You don't sound well," said the good bishop. He promised Malou and me an extra hour before the Blessed Sacrament for us and the cast. I had also faxed Bishop Soc at Villa San Miguel. Success! We were all on fire for the Lord and the audience caught fire.

Little did I realize I was fading out. Since I wasn't sour-faced, nobody had a clue. I'm such a hero. Sound familiar?

Past midnight, roommate Pia Gandi Carpio, said quite sternly, "Bunny, you had better go straight home to Manila *now*, to fix what needs to be fixed." CFC missionaries do strenuous missions nationwide and overseas. I loved Gandi, a cancer survivor with a great personality, and didn't mind her practically screaming into my ear about a checkup. She was never this forceful.

So was Mom, who on mother's instinct rang to inquire when I'd be back, like, *how soon*. She insisted I return to San Jose and she'd make the appointment to see our family physician in San Francisco, Carmelo Roco (wife, Bernadette). And this is where the high drama begins.

My brother, Doodle (Ancel), acts as *kuya* to us at Silicon Valley. At the San Jose airport, I reported, happily, "Bleeding gone, all by itself!" I enjoyed a respite for a day and a half; spoke too soon.

An hour after I landed, Casey and his girlfriend, Jackie, drove me into San Francisco on the scenic 208, an extra sunset gesture. I was wiped out and not very chatty. When Jackie and I crossed to Sutter st, a warm rush of red recurred. "Oh no, it's happening again!" I was rather annoyed by then, more than nervous.

Dr. Roco took one look at me, fashionable in winter gear, mind you. He grew pale over my loss of blood. After a brief examination and quick calls, he held me by the elbow and practically ran me to an Ob-gyne two blocks away.

"You're gushing blood," said the tall doctor with white hair. Very distinguished-looking. Very expensive-looking, too.

"I'm admitting you tonight for a DNC and total hysterectomy. Your uterus is inflamed . . "

"But I had an ultrasound six months ago. I was fine!," I replied meekly. "Your condition has changed in six months," he intoned.

"Well, God is good," I said. Meaning, thank God I was still standing and treatable. "What?," the doctor asked.

"I said, God is good." Me with the Holy Rosary wrapped around my right wrist, and he a Jew.

"Yes," he answered, looking me straight in the eye. "It's a good thing to bring God into this."

Dr. Roco, concerned about my welfare on all counts, decided to seek a second opinion. When we arrived at ER at a nearby hospital, I thought he needed the wheelchair more than me. (I declined being wheeled around.) He had me tested—the works—and brought in yet another Ob-gyne from the outside. The "ER" doctor resembled Richard Dreyfuss. The last one, Richard Gere. I was on a roll. Gere performed minor surgery and removed a gross-looking polyp, suspected to be a cause of my troubles.

True to form, Doodle and wife Payan scrambled in worried, asking if I was hungry and would I live. By then Mom had sent out a Prayer S.O.S. Our guardian angels were on red alert. Casey is excellent at emergencies—runs in the family. Etched in my mind are his controlled tears as he listened attentively over coffee and cake on the corner of Sutter as I contemplated my last will and testament—and a root dye preceding ER.

YOUNG. Amazing spiritual and physical awakening.

Mom, still the bravest one and clinging to our Blessed Mother, took charge at home and nobody fell apart. My family, thank you—those who knew—for taking our cries for help to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. God bless you, Ms Lyn Reyes and family, ever faithful assistant in Manila.

End of story? If I've tired you out by now, that's the point.

Biopsy benign. Blinky, wife Anna and kids, Daniel and Gabriel, gave me a Sunday treat. Over Peking Duck, nine-year-old Daniel asked, "Tita Bunny, what's a missionary?" I was stumped for a short answer, but Blinky came to the rescue: "A missionary is someone who works for God. God's the Boss." Daniel seemed satisfied.

No need to complicate matters. So, the next few days I slept, shopped and went to St. Joseph's Basilica, a five-minute brisk walk away. "What's next, dear God?"

I was back in Manila late evening of Dec. 1, bleeding slightly. I got a friendly but firm lecture from my Ob-gyne, Theresa Henson, because I had seen her six months back about debilitating non-menstrual cramps. She had worked out a plan, but I disappeared into a recording studio for a children's album, of all things.

Today we discussed a total hysterectomy, my choice, upon recommendation abroad due to my active lifestyle. I was sad to have lost four lads in the womb. But I can't dwell on what I don't have if I want to be a useful human being.

On Dec. 7, terrific husband to our pious Ate Ellen, Vir Redor, died of cancer. Hoping to comfort Ellen in the hospital room, I could only stand there and proclaim calmly, "Ooops. Here it comes again." Blood clots. By the fistsfull. She broke away from the convoy to the memorial chapel to take me and Lyn to Makati Med.

Surgery rescheduled Dec. 10. From the 17th, nephew Gus Tambunting organized logistics. Prayer warrior cardiologist, Nita Zagala, gave clearance for major surgery. It didn't have to happen this way.

Survival tips to warn you: **Read** and **Obey. Ignore** and **Weep.** No one should be too busy. Girls, have mercy upon yourselves and those whose lives you affect (other tips to follow).

* * *

(Editor's Note: Jeanne checked out of the hospital last Dec. 15, exulting over her "amazing spiritual and physical awakening. Below, her obstetrician-gynecologist follows up with this backgrounder on Jeanne's 'condition:)

What is Perimenopause?

By Maria Theresa Guevara-Henson, MD

THERE are three instances in a woman's life where we come to realize how complicated our body is.

The first is **menarche** or the time we get our first menstruation.

The second is **childbirth.**

And the last is **menopause.** Menopause in medical terms is defined as the permanent cessation of menses that occurs after the cessation of ovarian function. This, however, is not as simple as it sounds.

Changes occur years before and after this event, thus the term **perimenopause** was coined to refer to the time before, during, and after menopause. This period varies from the uneventful to a time of severe physical or psychological symptoms.

It may begin insidiously or with abrupt onset usually in the mid- to late—40s. Because each woman's response to menopause may be different, the presentation and subsequent management must be individualized.

The most significant symptom of menopausal transition is menstrual irregularity. This symptom occurs in 90 percent of women during the four years of transition prior to menopause. It is commonly ignored or discounted by both the patient and the physician.

However, it is in this age group that an increased incidence of certain organic conditions such as malignancy, uterine fibroids or myomas and polyps are commonly seen, which could also present itself as heavy, irregular or prolonged vaginal bleeding. Thus, early recognition followed by proper evaluation is the key when faced with this problem.

As women go through this transition, many of them experience a range of emotions which can encompass mild concern to frank denial. The loss of fertility and menstrual function is viewed by many as a transition to old age.

And because of this denial, they are hesitant to share their experiences not only with their physicians but also with family and friends. In this way, they can only further harm themselves.

Jeanne's experience will hopefully teach an unsuspecting public about the importance of early recognition and acceptance of these changes that occur in our body. Knowing more about menopause and perimenopause will help you deal with all the changes it involves.

See your gynecologist or talk to a friend. And remember that menopause and perimenopause are not a disease, nor is it the end. It is just the start of another chapter in our life.

'Band of Brothers' concludes its run on a high note

BY NOELANI TORRE

WE said farewell to HBO's "Band of Brothers" a week ago with the back-to-back showing of Parts 9 and 10, "Why We Fight" and "Points." The miniseries has been a gripping 10 hours in the running, and we can now make our sweeping conclusion that it is indeed epic, in the truest sense of the word.

"BAND OF BROTHERS." An epic in the truest sense of the word.

Eight weeks

For a total of eight weeks, we followed the men of E (Easy) Company of the 506th Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division as they fought in and came to grips with a war that had swept them away from their homes and loved ones.

Now that their unforgettably real trials are over, we find ourselves a little sad that it's, well, over. It has been an exciting watch, made more intense by the fact that we were very much aware that everything we saw on the screen had happened for real more than half a century ago.

The miniseries debuted on Southeast Asian screens last Oct. 27 and ended on Dec. 15. An HBO original presented in association with DreamWorks and Playtone, "Band" is executive-produced by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg. It has a total of eight directors: Phil Alden Robinson (Episode 1, "Currahee"), Richard Loncraine (2, "Day of Days"), Mikael Salomon (3, "Carentan," 10, "Points"), David Nutter (4, "Replacements"), Tom Hanks (5, "Crossroads"), David Leland (6, "Bastogne"), David Frankel (7, "The Breaking Point," 9 "Why We Fight") and Tony To (8, "The Last Patrol").

Capture

Based on Stephen E. Ambrose's best-selling "Band of Brothers," this is the story of the elite paratrooping Easy Company, from basic training to D-Day and the capture of Hitler's Eagle's Nest in Berchtesgaden.

Ambrose based his book on numerous interviews he conducted with surviving members of the company, and thus it is their highly individual voices that are heard. So it is with the miniseries.

"Band of Brothers" has been a colossal undertaking, what with its $120 million budget, 500 speaking-role cast, and more than 10,000 extras. The result is equally titanic in proportion.

The critics have also responded positively, with Variety calling "Band" an "imposing, vastly impressive powerhouse that will not be denied" and Enlist TV saying that it has "the punch of a howitzer."

In the last two episodes, where the artillery blasts, whining bullets, and explosions are winding down, other issues about the war emerge. In Episode 9, entitled "Why We Fight," the company comes across an abandoned concentration camp in the forest near a German town.

This was a side of the war that the men had never encountered before and their very personal reactions brought home the horror ingrained in the emaciated bodies and the rotting corpses of their prisoners.

Devastating

But, as Todd McCarthy of Variety points out, "What's new, and devastating, is the sight of American soldiers rounding up the citizens of the nearby town and forcing these old German bourgeois, all dressed in their Sunday finest and disclaiming any knowledge of the camp, to bury the dead."

It painted a stark picture of man's cruelty to his fellow man. And for the soldiers who were cynical about the war, this made them realize why it had to be fought.

Another touch we liked in this episode was the men's realization that the Germans were people who were, in fact, very much like them in values and temperament.

The opening scene, with a string quartet playing a somber Beethoven piece in the midst of the rubble of a fallen town, showed the human side of "the enemy."

Episode 10, "Points" is where Easy Company enters the Bavarian town of Berchtesgaden, which once housed all the chiefs of the Third Reich. While up in Hitler's mountaintop retreat, "Eagle's Nest," the soldiers learn of the surrender of the German army and they raid cellars to celebrate. There's a lot of raiding and looting in this episode, as a matter of fact, as well as in the earlier ones.

Before, however, the men had to be content with Lugers and other German military paraphernalia. While they were invading Germany and Berchtesgaden, the spoils were richer—fine wine, silver cuttlery, even photographs from Hitler's personal photo album.

Looting

The looting is one aspect of the war that the series' makers didn't whitewash. Though it does not sound honorable, it did happen and they don't try to hide this. Another thing which they reveal is the issue of murder. When the war was winding down, soldiers found themselves with too much free time, too much booze, and too much firepower. So, even in Episode 10 with the peaceful and picturesque Austrian landscape for backdrop, the violence of the war goes on.

Major Winters (Damian Lewis) is once again the narrative voice in the last episode (he was the narrator in the first ones), which is very appropriate as he is the heart of the company and more or less the central character. "Reserved, thoughtful, talented but hardly exceptional, Winters perfectly embodies grace under pressure and modesty in the face of exceptional behavior," says Variety's McCarthy.

It is he who draws the series to a close, detailing what happened to the company's surviving members after the war—this, while they are playing baseball. And so it began in the bloody fields of Normandy and ended, three years later, in a chalky baseball field in Austria.

Devastatingly real and thought-provoking, what makes "Band of Brothers" more compelling is not just its outstanding effects, score, etc., but the true stories of the men themselves, these self-depreciating individuals who call themselves "lucky" because they spilled their blood side by side for freedom and country more than half a century ago.

Heno de Pravia

Over

P300,000

worth of prizes to be won

Winning Image Models get P100,000 cash each.

1. Open to male/female aspirants, 16 to 35, single or married. Previous winners are not qualified to join the search.
2. Attach 1 close-up (3R, most recent) color photo to any of these proofs of purchase:
   - One (1) empty Heno de Pravia (HDP) Soap Pack (135 g. or 180 g.)
   - Two (2) empty 90 g. HDP Soap Packs
   - One (1) empty HDP Skin Whitening Soap/Cream Pack
   - One (1) back label of HDP Deo Roll-on Active Plus
   - One (1) back label of Heno de Pravia Agua de Colonia

   On the empty pack, print your name, address, phone numbers and signature.
3. If you're sending a back label, stick it at the back of the photo. Write your name, address, phone numbers, and signature on a separate piece of paper.
   Mail entries to:

HENO DE PRAVIA
Search for Image Models 3
P.O. Box 19400 San Juan, MM

Lucky Searchers can win P30,000 worth of prizes.

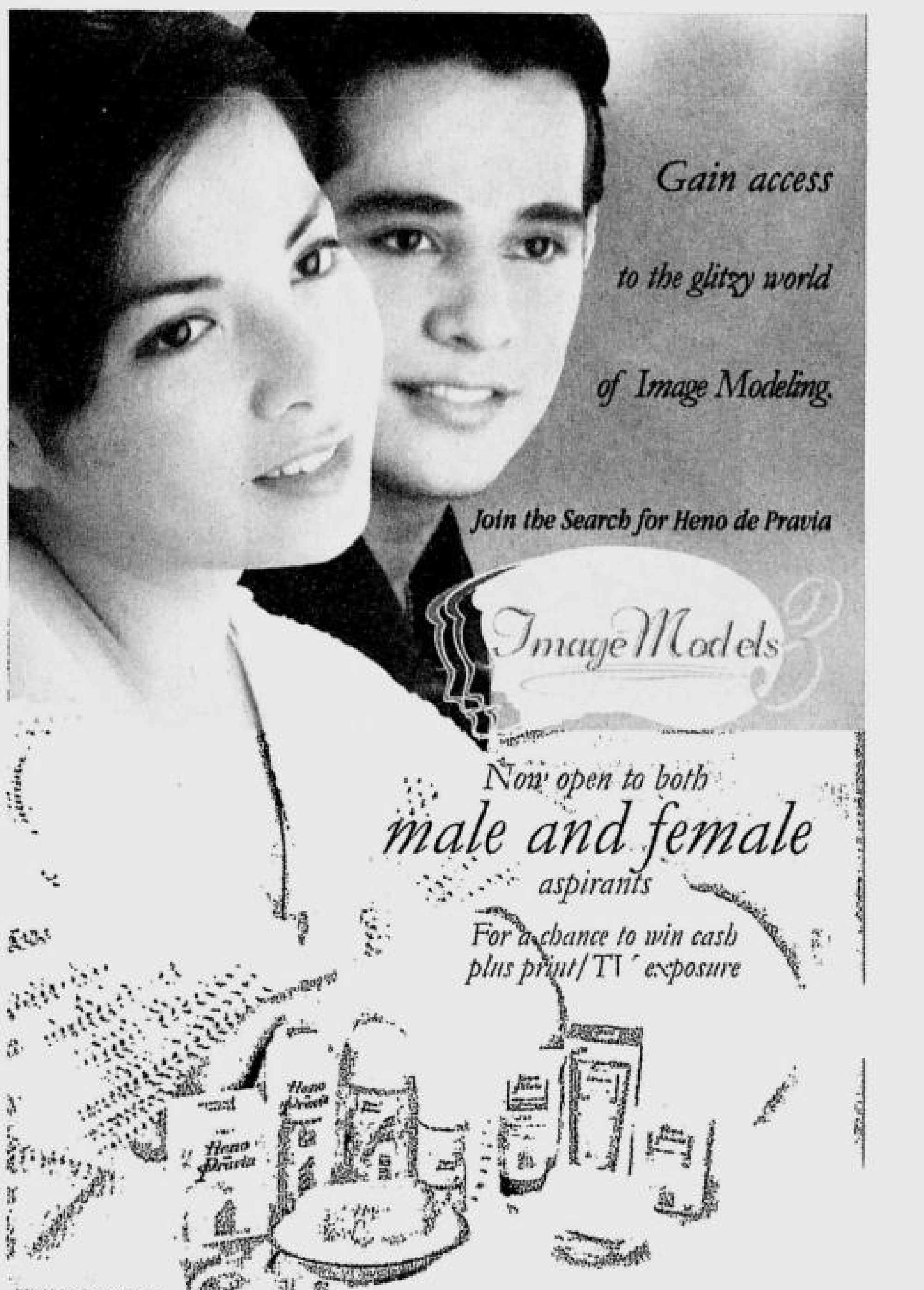
1. Attach 1 close-up (3R, most recent) photo of your Image Model to any of the above-mentioned proofs of purchase.
2. At the back of the photo, print the name of your Image Model candidate. On the empty pack, print your name, address, phone nos. and signature. Mail entries to the address above.

Lucky Senders can win up to P60,000.

1. Lucky Senders are entries without photos attached, and are eligible only for the 3 bimonthly draws of P20,000 each. Write your name, address, phone nos., and signature on any of the above-mentioned HDP proofs of purchase. Mail entries to the same address.
2. Non-winning Image Model and Lucky Searcher entries are also qualified for the draws. So send as many entries as you can!

* *Entries must be received at least 5 days before the remaining draw dates: (1st) Jan 16, 2002; (2nd) Mar 18, 2002; (3rd) May 16, 2002*

In cooperation with
Horizon Edsa Hotel



PROMO DETAILS:

The nationwide promo runs from Nov. 17, 2001 to May 17, 2002

Pre-screening for qualifiers:
All entries received will be screened by client, agency, and DTI rep. every 2 mos. The bimonthly Lucky Sender winner will be drawn from the Lucky Sender and non-winning Image Model/Lucky Searcher entries

Criteria for pre-screening:
Photogenic quality and image projection - 50%
Beauty (*For males: Appeal*) - 50%
Must possess a beautiful (or handsome) face with clear complexion

Selection of Finalists:
Only 10 final candidates (5 males, 5 females) who meet the cut-off score of 85% will be chosen for the final judging.

Final Image Model candidates and their Lucky Searchers (if any) will be notified by registered mail. They must confirm their participation on or before May 24, 2002.

The Lucky Searchers will have to show their registered mail and present a valid ID on the screening date.

Final Screening:
The 10 official candidates will undergo VTR and photo sessions on May 31, 2002 at Horizon Edsa Hotel. Judges will determine the official HDP Image Models.

Criteria for final screening:
Personality - 50%
Beauty (Appeal for Males) - 40%
Talent - 10%

Announcement of Winners:
Awarding of Image Model/Lucky Searcher winners will be on June 1, 2002 in one of Manila's prestigious malls.

Prizes:
Image Models: each receives P100,000 in cash *plus P10,000 worth of local & imported Gal products.*

Lucky Searchers (if any): each receives P20,000 in cash *plus P10,000 worth of local & imported Gal products*

Lucky Senders: each receives P20,000 in cash.

For inquiries, call TACTICA Ads @ 671-9795 to 97

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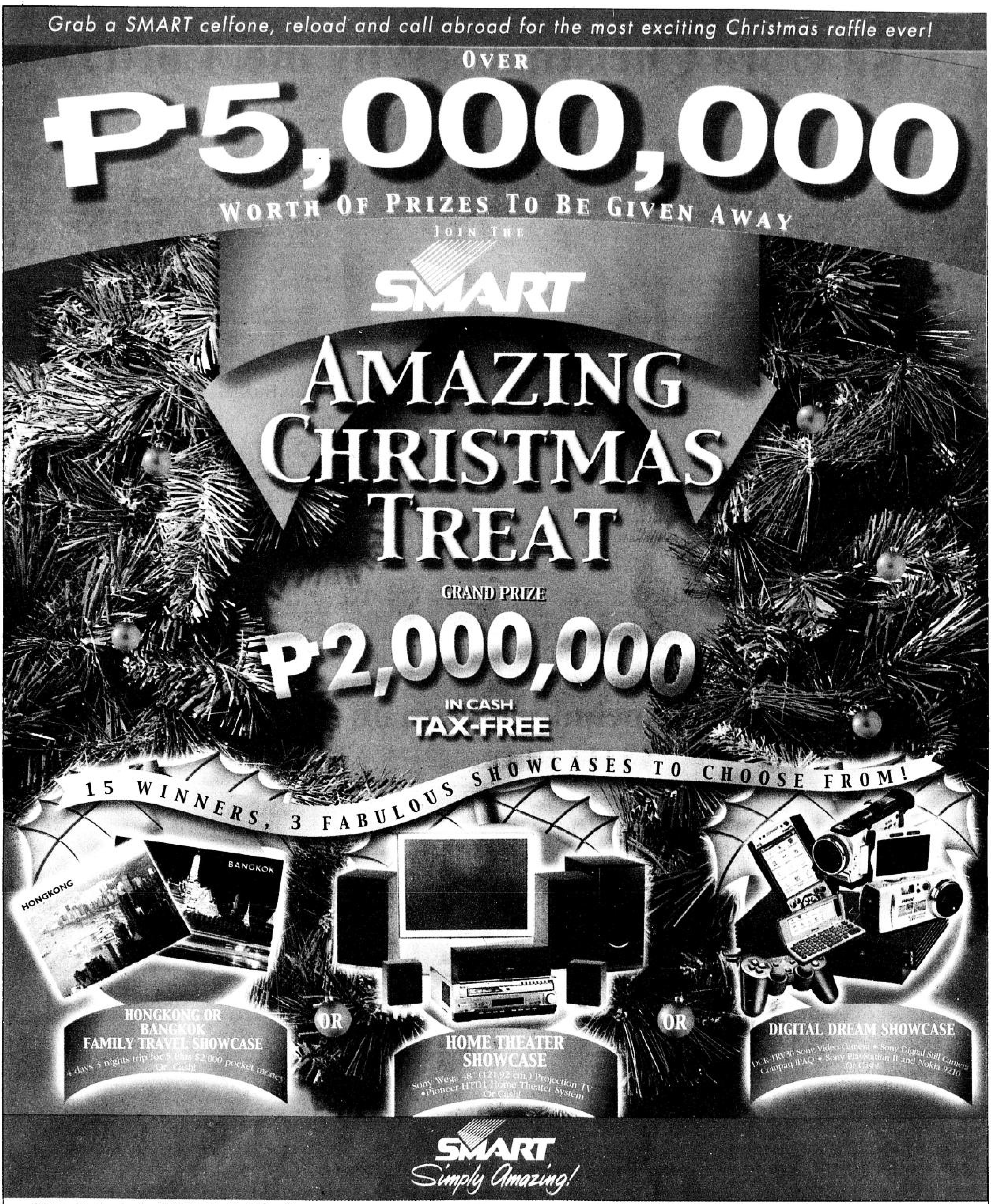
Grab a SMART celfone, reload and call abroad for the most exciting Christmas raffle ever!
OVER
₱5,000,000
WORTH OF PRIZES TO BE GIVEN AWAY
JOIN THE
SMART
AMAZING CHRISTMAS TREAT
GRAND PRIZE
₱2,000,000
IN CASH
TAX-FREE
15 WINNERS, 3 FABULOUS SHOWCASES TO CHOOSE FROM!
HONGKONG
BANGKOK
HONGKONG OR BANGKOK FAMILY TRAVEL SHOWCASE
4 days 3 nights trip for 5 Plus $2,000 pocket money Or Cash!
OR
HOME THEATER SHOWCASE
Sony Wega 48" (121.92 cm.) Projection TV •Pioneer HTD1 Home Theater System Or Cash!
OR
DIGITAL DREAM SHOWCASE
DCR-TRV30 Sony Video Camera • Sony Digital Still Camera Compaq iPAQ • Sony PlayStation II and Nokia 9210 Or Cash!
SMART
Simply Amazing!

Promo Mechanics for SMART Buddy Subscribers:

1. All active SMART Buddy (pre-paid) subscribers in good standing are eligible to participate.
2. To join, SMART Buddy subscribers must register via text. To register, key in CHRISTMAS <name>/<address>/<region> and send to 211.
   Region codes: Luzon-LZ ,Visayas-VS, Mindanao-MN, Metro Manila-MM
   Subscribers will be charged P2.50 per message sent.
3. The cellular phone number of SMART Buddy subscribers will serve as their raffle entry. There can only be one registered name per cellular phone number. Once a subscriber joins, no one else will be allowed to register using the same cellular phone number unless he quits the promo. In the event that the winning cellular phone number was registered under two users within the same month of the promo duration, the current registered name will be recognized. However, one person can register several cellular phone numbers at one time.
4. All registered participants can earn raffle entries in three easy ways:

•Via Smart Buddy Reloads

• Every reload entitles the subscriber to earn raffle entries. The number of raffle entries earned is determined by the cumulative value of reloads at the end of each month as illustrated below:

CUMULATIVE RELOAD VALUE* PER SUBSCRIBER (PER MONTH)	RAFFLE ENTRY(IES)
₱300	1
₱500	5
₱800	12
₱1,000	20
every ₱300 beyond the 1st ₱1,000	5

*Note: Pre-paid reloading via Call & Text Card, SMART Money and SMART Mobile Banking is entitled to raffle entries. Raffle entries earned through reloads will be credited after the end of each month (e.g. all entries earned for November will be reflected in a subscriber's raffle entry balance by December 1 only).

•Via Activation

•Each new SMART Buddy SIM card activation during the promo period entitles the subscriber to one (1) entry. The raffle entry earned will be credited at the end of the month.

•All activations for the duration of the promo period will be awarded raffle entries for as long as the subscriber has duly registered for the promo.

•Via SMART IDD

•Every IDD call that reaches a minimum of three (3) minutes in duration is entitled to 3 entries.

5. To view the number of raffle entries earned, key in CHRISTMAS and send to 211.
   Rate per CHRISTMAS RAFFLE INQUIRY is ₱2.50.
6. All entries earned for a particular month will be included in the monthly draw for the same period only. However, all entries not drawn are still qualified for the grand draw on January 11, 2002.
7. The participant can also opt to quit from the promo. To quit, key in CHRISTMAS QUIT and send it to 211. To register the number under a different name, the participant should repeat the registration steps. All valid entries made prior to quitting will still be included in the monthly and grand draw under the registered name.
   Rate for CHRISTMAS QUIT is ₱2.50

Promo Mechanics for SMART GOLD Subscribers:

1. Eligible individual or corporate SMART Gold (post-paid) subscribers can participate in the 2nd preliminary draw and grand draw following their billing cycles.
2. SMART Gold individual, corporate and government subscribers need not register, as they will be automatically included in the promo.
3. If a subscription is under a corporate or government account, in case it is drawn, the prize will be given to the corporate or government account.
4. The cellular phone number will serve as the raffle entry.
5. All registered participants can earn raffle entries in three easy ways:

• Via Monthly Service Fee

- A SMART Gold subscriber exceeding a prescribed minimum monthly billing requirement earns him/her raffle entries.
- For every ₱250 in excess of the minimum billing requirement of each plan, a Gold subscriber earns additional 5 raffle entries.

GOLD PLAN (current)	GOLD PLAN (old)	MINIMUM MONTHLY BILLING	RAFFLE ENTPY
300 (Corporate)	40	₱1,000	20
600	80	₱1,500	30
1,200	120 & 160	₱2,500	50
1,800	200 & 500	₱3,000	60
3,000	750	₱4,500	90
4,000	1,000	₱6,000	120

- For example, a Gold subscriber under Plan 600 has a billing of ₱2,500 he/she will earn a total of 50 raffle entries.

Plan	Minimum Monthly Billing Req.	Raffle Entry
Plan 600	₱1,500	30+20 = 50 raffle entries

Excess of ₱1,000 / 250 x 5 = 20

•Via Activation

•Each SMART Gold activation entitles the subscriber to one (1) entry.

•Via SMART IDD

• Every IDD call that reaches a minimum of three (3) minutes in duration is entitled to 3 raffle entries.

6. To view the number of raffle entries that you have earned, key in CHRISTMAS and send to 211. For SMART Gold, balances will be updated at the end of the billing cycle.
   Rate per CHRISTMAS RAFFLE INQUIRY is ₱2.50.

GENERAL Promo Mechanics for SMART Buddy and SMART Gold Subscribers:

1. The draw dates and prizes are as follows:

DRAW DATES	PERIOD COVERED	PRIZES
Dec. 5, 2001 (For SMART Buddy Only)	Nov. 1 -30, 2001 (For SMART Buddy Only)	• Five (5) winners who can choose from three (3) showcases • Winners will be distributed geographically as follows: 1 winner each from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao; and 2 winners from Metro Manila
Jan. 10, 2002 (For SMART Buddy and SMART Gold)	Dec. 1-31, 2001 (For SMART Buddy and SMART Gold)	• Ten (10) winners who can choose from three (3) showcases • Winners will be distributed geographically as follows: 2 winners each from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao; and 4 winners from Metro Manila
GRAND DRAW: Jan. 11, 2002	Nov. 1, 2001 – December 31, 2001	One (1) GRAND PRIZE WINNER OF P2,000,000 IN CASH – TAX-FREE

Showcase 1:	Travel/Shopping for 5 persons in Bangkok or Hong Kong plus US$2,000 pocket money. This package includes 4 days and 3 nights accommodation plus round-trip airfare.
Showcase 2:	Digital Dream Showcase (Nokia 9210, DCR-TRV30 Sony Video Camera, Sony Digital Still Camera, Compaq IPAQ and Sony Play Station II)
Showcase 3:	Home Theater Showcase Sony Wega 48" (121.92cm) Projection TV and Pioneer HTD1 Home Theater System which includes 5-disc DVD/CD changer, satellite speakers, center speaker and an active subwoofer)

2. All the prizes are TAX-FREE. If a showcase winner wants to convert his/her prize to cash, they will be given ₱175,000.00.
3. A winner may only win once every raffle draw.
4. The promo is from November 21 to December 31, 2001. All activations, reloads and IDD calls made since Nov. 1, 2001 are included in the promo.
5. Winners shall be notified thru the following means:
   a. Text Message.
   b. Registered Mail
6. Winners within Metro Manila may claim their prizes at the SMART Tower, 6799 Ayala Ave., Makati City. Provincial winners can claim their prizes at the nearest SMART office indicated in the register mail.
7. Winners must present their active SMART GSM celfone and SIM card, valid I.D. with photo and registered mail when claiming their prizes.
8. All employees of SMART Communications, Inc., Pilipino Telephone Corporation, and their advertising agencies and relatives up to the 2nd degree of affinity or consanguinity are automatically disqualified from the promo.
9. The raffle will be held at the 27/F, SMART Tower, 6799 Ayala Ave., Makati City. Draws will be held at 12NN on December 5, January 10 and January 11.
10. Prizes should be claimed within 60 days from notification of winners.

*Actual prizes may vary from the ones shown.

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Elijah Wood rides his first commercial juggernaut

By Mark Kennedy

NEW YORK—When it came to auditioning for the biggest and riskiest role of his young career, Elijah Wood just mailed it in.

That's not to say the 20-year-old actor took it lightly. To win the lead part of Frodo Baggins in "The Lord of the Rings"—the $300 million, three-movie production that would take 16 months to film—Wood refused to just saunter into the casting agent's office.

English accent

Instead, he put on a puffy shirt and some goofy suspenders, adopted an English accent and went off into the California woods to videotape himself as a hobbit. George Huang, a buddy and director of "Swimming with Sharks," filmed the audition and they edited it together.

"I wanted to be noticed," says Wood, who would have done "anything to get the role."

Now, with most of the movie trilogy filmed, the actor known for his arty turn in "The Ice Storm" finds himself leading an international juggernaut. With bemusement he sees his likeness splashed across bus shelters, billboards and a set of fast food chain collectible cups.

"Isn't it weird?" he asks. "I never thought I'd be a part of anything this commercial."

High stakes

During an interview to promote the first film, Wood shrugs at the notion that the stakes have suddenly gotten quite high. As Frodo, the hobbit whose journey is at the heart of "The Lord of the Rings," the actor must shoulder both the story and the movie franchise.

"You can assume that if it does well, it's going to be popular in some way, shape or form for the rest of my life. That's a staggering thought. I'll always be associated with it," he says.

"However, if I maintain a career that has nothing to do with it and I can do things that are successful in their own right aside from 'Lord of the Rings,' then it can be nothing but one part" of a healthy livelihood.

Fellow hobbit and friend Sean Astin isn't worried about Wood handling the pressure. The two bonded during the arduous filming in New Zealand, over a year of lacing up prosthetic hobbit feet and gluing on itchy ears.

"He can't fail—just look at his body of work," says Astin. "Should he be concerned if the film doesn't

ELIJAH/p.F2

WOOD arrives at the premiere of "The Lord of the Rings" at The Egyptian, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. REUTERS

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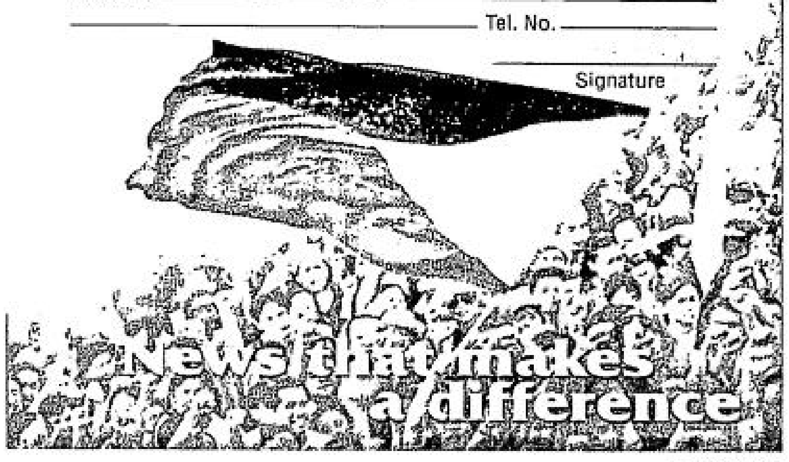
News that makes a difference

RN66528

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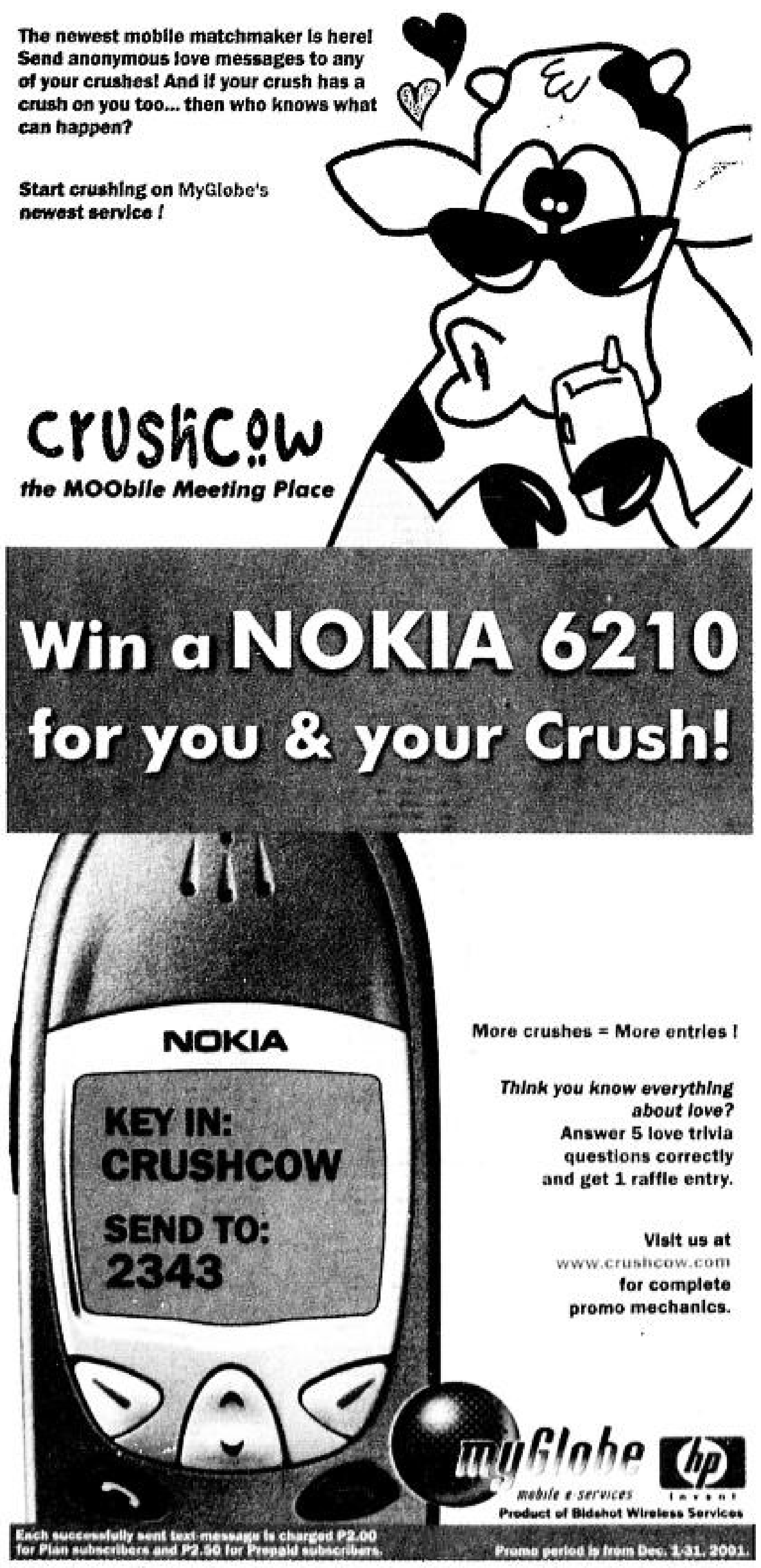
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SENNHEISER

Christmas gifts for the stars

FACE TO FACE

Inday Badiday

IF I were Santa Claus, I'd be the most generous gift-giver in the world. I'd be sure to give gifts that are not only useful and practical but also profoundly meaningful. Take a look at what I'd give to the stars:

Glory days

Vilma Santos—a big box of anti-stress tabs for her to cope well both as Lipa City mayor and wife and mother to her family—and still allow her to do films that will help bring back the glory days of the movies.

Fernando Poe Jr.—plane tickets for two to all the exotic vacation spots for him and wife Swannie, because it's definitely time for them to take life as a long vacation where they can rediscover each other's passions.

Sharon Cuneta—a machine that will pour all her insights about life, love, success, happiness and power into the head of her daughter KC, so that the latter doesn't need to learn her lessons first hand—which is the hard way.

Lea Salonga—a huge bell that will toll for her wedding with the charming prince who will lovingly erase all her fears about marriage and everlasting commitment.

Richard Gomez—a cause he can be passionate and MAD about. I truly believe Goma cares for the future of this country and I hope that his dismal failure in the political arena will make him look for other avenues to help.

Magic wand

Aga Muhlach—a magic wand that will soften the hearts of all the people he loves, so there can be genuine renewal and reconciliation in the family—for success everywhere else is meaningless when there's failure in relationships.

Amalia Fuentes—a clock that will tell her it's time for love to heal all wounds and for peace to reign in the family and in her world.

Alma Moreno—a red phone that's a direct line to heaven for her to personally ask God for the miracle that will make Mark Anthony drug-free and heal Vandolph.

Dolphy—an alarm clock that will wake him up and prove to him that what's happening to Vandolph is just a terrible nightmare.

Rudy Fernandez—medicine for guilt for him to process and resolve in his conscience what's happening to his first-born, Mark Anthony.

Phillip Salvador—a compass that will show him the redirection he needs to make in his life so that he can stop wondering what went wrong and proceed to tread the path to real happiness.

Eddie Garcia—a professorial position in the university of life, where he can teach younger action stars about the fine art of "everything in moderation."

Nora Aunor—a cure for amnesia for her to remember the people who truly love her but whom she takes for granted, as well as all the lessons in life she has already learned but keeps on forgetting.

Christopher de Leon—a slot as a contestant on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" in the US, where he's now vacationing with his family and where he can win in dollars and not in our severely depreciated peso.

Conviction

Robin Padilla—a son who will not only give him immeasurable joy but also give him the conviction to sustain his commitment to do right with his God.

Maricel Soriano—a TV drama anthology so her fans can regularly get a fix of her superlative dramatic gifts to replace her tired, overstretched comedic confections.

Martin Nievera—a reality check that Pops is still the best woman for him.

Pops Fernandez—a reality check that Martin is still the best man for her.

Cesar Montano—a good movie project that will not only be for the Metro Manila Film Festival. There seems to be a grain of truth to the observation that Cesar's films are superlative only when they are for the December filmfest!

POE JR. Long vacation.

Janice de Belen—The capacity to love again and again...her husband John. And if that were not possible anymore, to find peace and tranquility in her life with her children.

Rosana Roces—Membership in a renewal community like Elim or Couples for Christ's Handmaids of the Lord—so she can get real connection with God and experience the joy that comes not from the world but from Him.

Gary V.—International stardom, not only because his quality as an entertainer is world-class, but also so that his message of salvation will not only be for the Philippines but for the world as well.

Ruffa Gutierrez—a genie in a bottle that will make all her Hollywood dreams come true and give her the man who will make her vagabond heart finally stop its wanderlust.

Angelu de Leon—a good script consultant not just for the screen but, most important, for her real life—with the melodramatic twists and turns strictly confined to her screen dalliances.

Judy Ann Santos –a love life for the heart and not just for publicity. I dread to see the day that she'd be truly in love but nobody would care anymore because would it be for real or just for the mileage again?

Mirror

Claudine Barretto—a mirror on the wall that will tell her exactly what she wants and how to get it in order for her to be truly, really happy.

Joseph and Jinggoy Estrada—more real friends. The recent past seems to prove to them that they have fewer friends than they thought they had. May they also find a home in their heart so that they can be at peace wherever they go.

MUHLACH. Magic wand.

SALONGA. Wedding bells.

Ramon Revilla, Tito Sotto, Imelda Papin, Joey Marquez, Rey Malonzo and all other actor-politicians—an ultra-sensitive stethoscope for them to know and monitor the pulse of the people.

Nida Blanca, Ricky Belmonte, Eddie Rodriguez, Maria Theresa Carlson, Ray Ventura and all the movie people who perished this year—peace and reconciliation with God.

Film directors—a new pair of eyes with which they can develop new, more exciting visions to pursue for our movies.

Screenplay writers—reenergized minds so that they can discard old, tired and trite formulas and explore and experiment with braver, newer worlds of creative cinematic excellence.

Movie reporters—a 500-percent increase in their writer's fees so that there'd be less temptation to augment their income elsewhere.

Now, if only I had the magical powers to make all these gifts come true!

Elijah Wood rides . . .

(From page F1)

perform? It is Elijah's doe-eyes on the buses that go by. But he's got more confidence and more comfort in his own skin than anyone I've ever met. Do what you will to try to knock the guy off center, he's just not going to go."

Debut

Partly that's because Wood has been around the block. Since making his debut in Richard Gere's 1990 thriller "Internal Affairs," Wood has appeared in "Avalon," "Paradise," "Flipper," "Forever Young," "Radio Flyer," "The War," "Deep Impact" and "The Faculty."

"I'm really blessed to have had a career before 'Lord of the Rings,'" Wood says. "People already knew who I was to a certain degree—not huge, but they knew, so it wasn't this debut thing.

Like, Mark Hamill in 'Star Wars'—he'd never done anything else before so there was nothing else to counteract that role.

"I'm lucky. I'm 20. It's still the beginning," says Wood.

When the actor's homemade audition tape landed on the desk of director Peter Jackson, the moviemaker tasked with capturing J.R.R. Tolkien's epic vision knew right away that he'd found his leading hobbit. Few candidates had gone to as much trouble to prove their interest.

Wood's already elfish features certainly didn't hurt his chances. His wide-set eyes, translucent skin, fine features and tiny nose—not to mention his smallish stature—lend him an ethereal, expressive quality.

"His eyes are a window to his soul," says actress Liv Tyler, who plays the Elf princess Arwen. "He has big blue eyes and they're so powerful. He's so good at showing emotion effortlessly. I feel when I watch the film that it always comes back to him, no matter where you go."

Parallels

Wood squirms. "I don't want to take all the credit as if I'm the only person who could play the character, which I'm not. But certainly physically, there are quite a lot of parallels in the way that Frodo's described, which I find interesting," he says.

Another parallel that developed while filming was the closeness forged among the actors playing Tolkien's nine-member fellowship. Along with Wood and Astin, they are Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen, John Rhys-Davies, Billy Boyd, Orlando Bloom, Dominic Monaghan and Sean Bean.

"The fellowship became a reality," Wood says. "We made some of the best friends of our lives. We went through ups and downs together as a single unit. I learned how to surf—we all learned how to surf. We took vacations together. It was so special and profound."

The nine actors were known to rally together to lobby for certain aspects of the production. "This is not just a film, not for anyone involved. It was life for us," says Wood.

As if to prove that point, all nine got the No. 9 in Elvish—which looks a bit like two curly m's—tattooed on their bodies. "We're going to be intrinsically linked for the rest of our lives anyway," says Wood. "It made it permanent."

Next project

That bond and the months spent in rural New Zealand made returning to America and resuming his career feel odd. Wood has already completed his next project—Ed Burns' "Ash Wednesday"—for which he worked only eight days and was in the makeup chair for only a few minutes.

"Coming back, I didn't really have a grasp on what my life meant anymore. Because my life was 'The Lord of the Rings.' It was as much a filmic experience as it was a life experience and vice versa," he says.

"I think I'm only now, in the last four or five months, really coming back into life."

Asked what he missed most, Wood lists family, friends, new CDs, the latest movies and Mexican food. Asked what he missed least during his sojourn, Wood thinks for a moment.

"Massive commercialism," he replies, with a laugh.

And now he's part of it. *AP*

Q: How does The Inquirer protect small fry?

Lastimoso to
5 cronies found keeping $100M in Swiss banks
Use of children by MILF assailed

A: We keep an eye on the big fish.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
News that makes a difference

RN67794

Marilou Diaz-Abaya on the making of 'Bagong Buwan'

BY EDMUND L. SICAM

DIAZ-ABAYA. Self-conscious.

"BAGONG Buwan" is Marilou Diaz Abaya's third film entry to the Metro Manila Film Festival. The film stars Cesar Montano as a Muslim physician, who returns home to Mindanao and finds himself stuck in the war zones, evacuating from one camp to another. This is also the third time in a row for Marilou and Cesar to work together for the filmfest.

"I don't think *naman* it's unique to me. A lot of directors work with the same (actor). I make very few films. The last three have been so big. I feel I still have very much to draw from Cesar and for him to draw from me. So we've been developing together as actor and director and I'm very fortunate to be able to have him again, because it's a different level in our relationship. The subject matter is really spiritual more than anything else. It's pushed beyond the usual boundary of a professional relationship."

Body language

According to Marilou, Cesar underwent a month learning about Islam, and most especially learning the body language of Muslim prayer. Marilou is all praises for her actor, "Cesar *naman*, aside from what I prepare for his syllabus, always does a lot of additional things on his own." As for Marilou, although she is an award-winning director, she felt a little insecure about tackling this topic on her own. "I was feeling very, very unqualified. I was self-conscious. I'm a Roman Catholic. Which is why I just didn't do anything else except study and prepare for it," Marilou shares.

In her past filmfest entries, she felt completely comfortable – she was at ease with "Jose Rizal" because she is fluent in Spanish and could refer to the original works of Rizal to check if her interpretations were consistent with Rizal's thoughts.

With "Muro-Ami," she was at home since she is a licensed diver and practically lives under the sea. But "Bagong Buwan," was definitely a challenge for her. "I don't know Arabic. (I had to read) everything in English (including the Koran)."

MARILOU/p.F4

'5 and Up' cops Best Youth program prize at 2001 Asian TV Awards

BY NESTOR U. TORRE

PROBE productions has another bright feather in its cap: the Best Youth program award for "5 and Up" from the 2001 Asian Television Awards. Imagine, the Filipino production even beat Disney-ESPN for the honor!

Particularly challenging

The Asian Tv competition is deemed a particularly challenging because it is participated in by shows from 23 different countries of the region, and its boards of judges have a correspondingly regional flavor. Thus, shows that hope to win have to have something that appeals and speaks to a wide variety of national tastes.

Since verbal language can sometimes be a limitation due to the jurors' different nationalities, it goes without saying that expressive visual language is a decided plus in communicating positively with all of the regional tilt's judges.

The particular "5 and Up" episode that represented the program at the awards was indeed visual in a unique sense: "Tulay ng Kulay (Bridge of Color)" dealt with children of mixed races living in Angeles, Pampanga, the so-called "souvenirs" of that city's long experience with US troops of various racial persuasions.

THE SHOW'S young female hosts.

Racism

The feature showed the reality of racism in the children's lives. Some of them left their homes only at night to avoid getting teased about their skin color. But, even after taking this precaution, a number of them still got verbally and even physically assaulted.

However, thanks to WEDPRO, a non-profit organization, these mixed-race youths are finally finding their voice—and their rightful place in the sun. The "5 and Up" feature on them has helped articulate their point of view and otherwise clear the air in this regard.

"5 and Up" has been on TV for nine years now, and we've been supporting it all this time. We like its combination of youthful hosts and significant topics, and its presentation of the youth's *intelligent* viewpoint on a wide variety of subjects.

All too often on local TV, children are presented as phoney, *pa*-cute and *pa-porma* little pseudo-adults, intrested only in fads, trends, and other superficial concerns. On "5 and Up," they are given a chance to be the better, more sensible parts of themselves, and thus provide good role models for the many children who view their telecasts.

Right blend

Which is not to say that the show has had things easy from the start. Finding the right blend of youthful spontaneity and perceptive presentation has occasionally been a problem.

We remember one time when we noted that the show's youth hosts were having far too giddy a time, to the extent that the topics up for discussion were in danger of being trivialized. We noted that it was one thing to be spontaneous, and quite another to be breezy and cocky for breeziness and cockiness' sake.

Instead of pooh-poohing the observation as just the sour comment of an old grouch, the people behind the show tried to get a clearer focus on the perceived problem, and did something about it—without putting too much of a dampener on the young hosts' natural enthusiasm, which all youth programs should have.

This ability to take criticism and keep improving has helped keep "5 and Up" fun *and* focused through the years, steadfast in its determination to "prove that there is a place for truthful kiddie journalism on local TV, so the idiot box is not just for idiots anymore."

The program's latest honor from the 2001 Asian TV Awards shows that it has achieved that goal, and more.

Blast destroys 60 internet rivals

The inevitable happened. With the coming of Blast (spelled as Bl@st, but pronounced as blast) prepaid Internet card, users see no point in continuing patronage with other second-rate Internet prepaid cards.

Blast is powered by Sky Internet, the biggest and most reliable Internet service provider, with over 7,000 dedicated lines with up to 56K for uninterrupted surfing.

Those who have tried Blast have one common response: an overwhelming feeling of contentment as brought about by the quick and easy connectivity they experience with the product.

Thousands of Internet prepaid card users in the metropolis are allegedly contemplating on an uprising against their former cards for rendering them shortchanged through the years. Rumors of demonstrations loom in and out of cyberspace.

Unconfirmed acts of outrage have been reported. Brought about by this rising discontent among Internet prepaid card users.

Scores of "blast other prepaid sites" have been created to provide an outlet for these unhappy prepaid surfers. The hit rates of these sites are reported to be phenomenal. In fact, flooding is commonly experienced due to the sheer bulk of hate mails these sites receive in a day.

"We have been fooled by these unscrupulous Internet prepaid service providers and we will not take this sitting down!", swears Dante Dizon, President of the recently formed "Blast Movement"- a group of disgruntled prepaid internet card users.

Inferior service is the major cause of unrest among these internet prepaid users who have been desperate for better service.

Blast promises to keep you connected once you get connected. A promise that can only be breached by forces outside Blast's domain like when your dog decides to snack on your cable or when your mom reprimands you to quit surfing, or perhaps, your maid trips on the wires.

Unannounced power interruption is another likely way of getting cut from your connection that's beyond Blast's control.

More users are expected to try Blast Internet prepaid card.

More users are expected to try Blast Internet prepaid card.

(No; that was not a typographical error, but an uncanny way to emphasize a detail. OK, admittedly, that was a desperate attempt from a desperate copywriter desperate to stretch body copy.)

With this, more incidents of unrest are expected to happen in the coming weeks.

Quite expected as Blast marketing and research personnel have practically pinpointed everything a prepaid Internet card user may ask for.

Blast boasts of the shrewdest, the most cunning, brilliant and good looking marketing team ever to work for a prepaid Internet card. People who know the business, and are real cool folks.

Rumors of piracy abound in the prepaid Internet card industry.

However, deep roots, great perks and a fat compensation package keep Blast's marketing team sticking to their company like bubble gum to your favorite sneakers' soles.

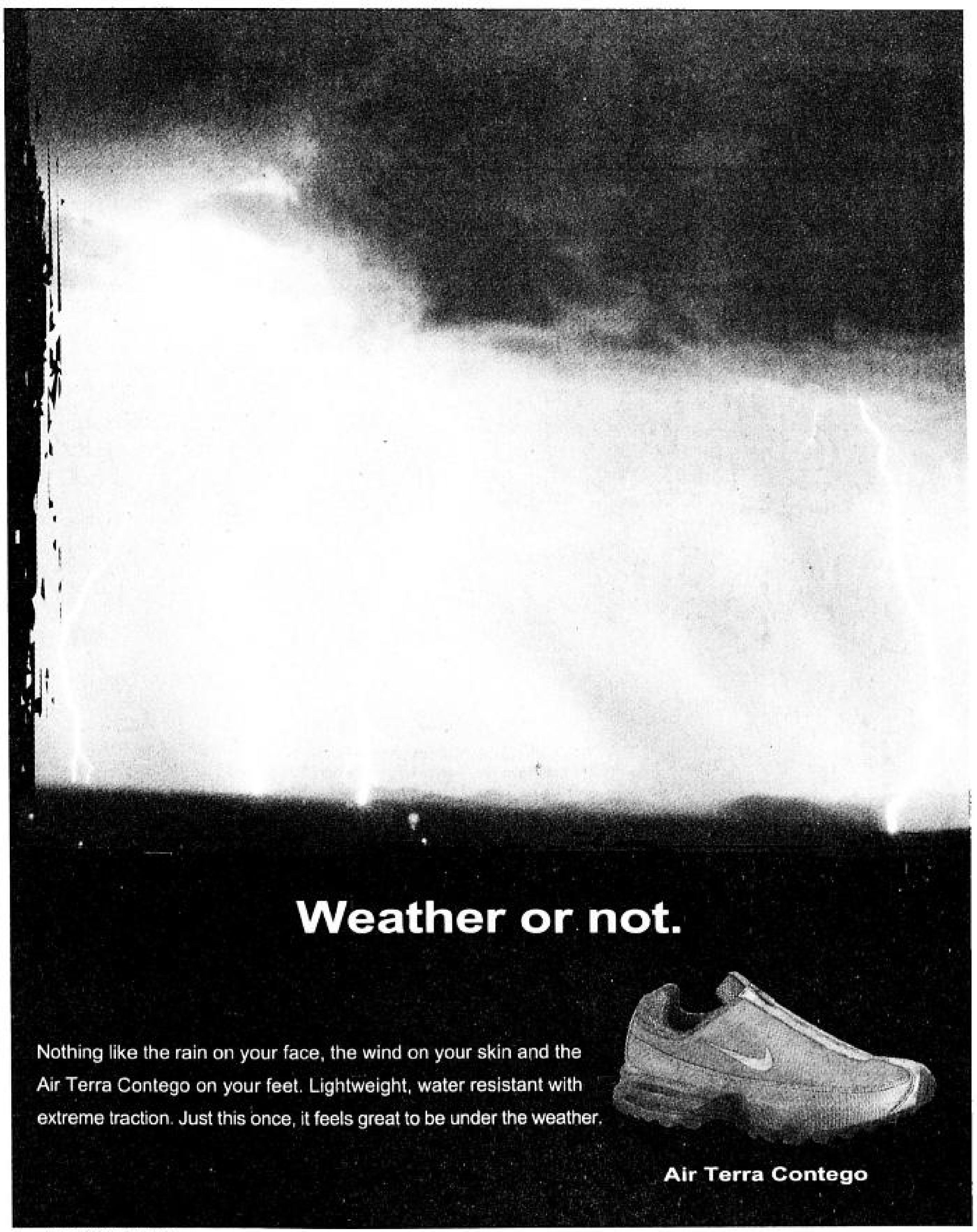
By the way, this is paid advertising so, we don't want you panicking unnecessarily and suing us for millions, OK?

Incidentally, more and more people are admiring the sheer creativity poured into the design of the Blast prepaid internet cards. A testament to the impeccable taste of the marketing team who approved it.

These designs are so funky that it is not surprising that a lot of guys and girls have been spotted to ditch the pictures of their lovers from their wallets in favor of Blast internet cards.

(Having said the last paragraph, do you still wonder why more incidents of unrest are expected next week?)

(ADVT.)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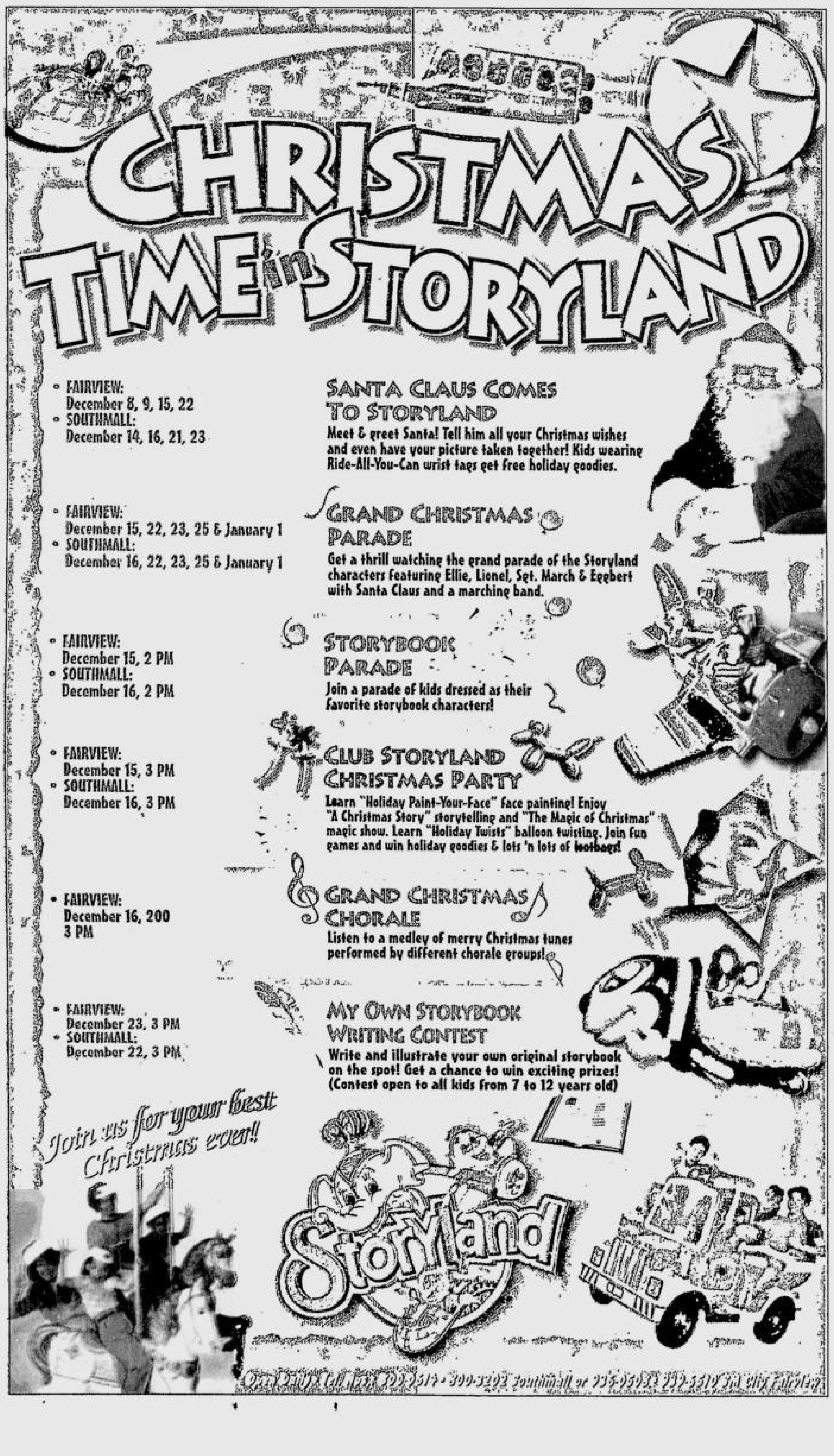
YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM DEC 22 - DEC 28

CH	2	4	5	7	9	13	23	29	[illegible]
	5:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 7:00 Arriba, Arriba 8:00 Mary D' Potter 9:00 Da Pilya en Da Pilot 10:00 Kakasa Ka Ba? 10:30 Sapul Kayo Dyan 11:00 "F" 11:30 Sports Unlimited	6:00 Auto Review 6:30 Uncut 7:00 Saturday Primetime Special 9:00 The Bodyguards 10:00 Explore with Mike 11:00 Auto Focus 11:30 Fox News	6:30 Wing Commander 7:00 Sailormoon Super S 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Celebrity Feud 8:30 Wow Mali! 9:30 Eezy Dancing 10:30 Saturday Night Specials *Lorenzo's Oil*	5:30 Imbestigador 6:30 Korek na Korek Ka Dyan 7:00 Idol Ko Si Kap 8:00 Kakabakaba 9:00 Pinoy Blockbuster 11:00 Master Showman Presents	6:00 Star Trek 7:00 Special Unit II 8:00 Strange World 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse 11:00 PGMA	8:00 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:00 Kagat Ng Dilim 11:00 IBC Elorde	6:00 Digital Tour 6:30 G2 Living 7:00 Explorer 7:30 Early Edition 8:30 Gilmore Girls 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 12:00 MYX Sampler	3:00 Q Show Case 7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras ng Katotohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 Celebrity Profile *Jon Bon Jovi* 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 The Billboard Music Awards 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Uncut *Naomi Judd* 11:30 Extreme Close Up *Julian Temple/Pandemonium*
	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Digimon 7:30 Wansapanataym 9:00 Pinoy Exposed 9:30 ABS-CBN Presents 11:30 Off The Record 12:00 The Weekend News	3:00 MBA 8:00 Street Legal 9:00 Sunday's Big Showdown 11:00 Business & Leisure 11:30 Fox News	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Guyferd 7:00 Price Is Right 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 The Big Night *Charlotte Church: Voice of an Angel/ Andrea Bocelli: Sacred Arias* 11:00 Sentinel	5:30 Partners Mel and Jay 7:00 Pokemon 7:30 Sinerama 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Entertainment This Weekend 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 Where In Time Is Carmen San Diego 8:30 Kids Say the Darndest Thing 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *Joseph* 11:00 Sunday Report 11:30 Ugnayan	4:00 PBA Game 1 6:30 PBA Game 2 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 Sinemaks 11:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Starship Troopers 6:30 Rugrats 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Futurama 8:00 Bette 8:30 Veronica's Closet 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 Murder in Smalltown X 10:30 Twilight Zone 11:00 News Central	5:00 Quartermaster Window Shop 7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night Movies 11:00 Bikini Open	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 Oscar Best Picture *The Sound of Music* 10:00 E! News Special *Wild About Harry Potter* 11:00 60 Minutes
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 FPJ Action Cinema 11:00 Headlines 11:30 The Correspondents	5:00 Metro TV 6:00 Value Vision 7:00 Sigaw 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Speed 11:00 Unlimited Diving	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 F 7:00 Mahha Go Go Go 7:30 Wheel Of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Touched By An Angel 9:30 Trabaho Lang 10:00 The Big News 10:30 High Tide	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 GMA's Best 11:00 Front Page 11:30 I-Witness	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Becker 7:30 Artiss 8:00 World's Most Amazing Videos 9:00 The X-Files 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:00 Joy to the World. A Gift of Music	5:30 Viva Music Channel 6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Beat UK 7:00 Primetime Classics 7:30 The Nanny 8:00 Dark Angel 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Points of View 11:30 Jenny Jones 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 E! True Hollywood Story *The Last Days of Judy Garland* 9:00 E! True Hollywood Story *Ruby Slippers* 10:00 60 Minutes 11:00 Wild On *Alps* 12:00 Talk Soup
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Oka Tokat 10:30 Kabalikat 11:00 Headlines 11:30 Mission X	5:00 Value Vision 6:00 Fox News 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Pulsong Masa 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Dragon League 7:00 2 Years Vacation w/ Dinosaurs 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 E.R 9:30 Urban Doktor 10:00 The Big News 10:30 FX The Series	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Kool Ka Lang 10:00 Kasangga 11:00 Front Page 11:30 The Probe Team	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Ed 8:00 Ally McBeal 9:00 The Practice 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:30 The Extremist	6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Later with Jools 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Popular 8:30 The Others 9:30 Just Shoot Me 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Zine 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan (Live)	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 E! Special 8:00 Mysteries and Scandals 8:30 E! Special 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Uncut *Nicole Kidman* 11:30 Extreme Close Up 12:00 Talk Soup
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Whattamen 10:30 Your Honor 11:00 Headlines 11:30 ISYU 101	4:00 MBA 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Paco Park Presents 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Pygmalio 7:00 Time Quest 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Friends 9:00 That '70s Show 9:30 Planet X 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Philippines Most Wanted	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Beh Bote Nga 10:00 Larawan 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Jessica Soho Reports	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Level 9 8:00 Roswell 9:00 Buffy the Vampire Slayer 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:00 Wrestling	5:00 PBA Game 1 7:30 PBA Game 2 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 New Music 6:30 Soundcheck 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Scariest Places 8:30 Game Plan 9:00 The District 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 In Focus *Laugh your Aspen* 8:00 Mysteries And Scandals 8:30 Search Party 9:00 Fashion Emergency 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Park City* 12:00 Talk Soup
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Attagirl 10:30 Maalaala Mo Kaya 11:00 Headlines 11:30 Pipol	4:00 Shop @ Home 5:00 Value Vision 6:00 Fox News 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Concert At The Park 11:00 Fora Medica	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Shulato 7:00 Fancy Lala 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Guinnes World Records 9:30 The Exchange 10:00 The Big News 10:30 By Request	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Daddy Di Do Du 10:00 Sa Dako Pa Roon, 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Debate with Mare at Pare	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Clueless 8:00 Felicity 9:00 Gabi Ng Parangal 12:00 Newswatch Now	6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Behind The Music 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Cineplex 23 9:30 Guide to Urban Living 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Travel Time 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 E! News Daily 7:00 Celebrity Profile 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 Celebrity Homes 9:30 E! News Daily 10:30 David Letterman 11:30 Extreme Close Up *Julian Temple/Pandemonium* 12:00 Talk Soup
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Star Cinema Presents 11:00 Headlines 11:30 True Crime	4:00 MBA 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Patrol 117 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Lazer Patrol 7:00 Starcom 7:30 Wheel Of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Ispup 9:30 On-Air 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Friday Box Office *Deep Red*	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Bubble Gang 10:00 GMA Love Stories 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Emergency	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 That's Life 8:00 Dharma & Greg 9:00 Largo 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 TV Greats on Friday *Celine Dion: These Are Special Times*	5:00 PBA Game 1 7:30 PBA Game 2 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Halo-Halo 7:00 Priemtime CLassics 7:30 Survivor: Africa 8:30 Mortal Combat 9:30 Oh Grow Up! 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Jenny Jones 12:30 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan (Live)	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 In Focus *Wild on the Rocks* 8:00 Mysteries & Scandals 8:30 Search Party 9:00 Fashion Emergency 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Rocks* 12:00 Talk Soup



CHRISTMAS TIME in STORYLAND

- FAIRVIEW: December 8, 9, 15, 22
- SOUTHMALL: December 14, 16, 21, 23

SANTA CLAUS COMES TO STORYLAND
Meet & greet Santa! Tell him all your Christmas wishes and even have your picture taken together! Kids wearing Ride-All-You-Can wrist tags get free holiday goodies.

- FAIRVIEW: December 15, 22, 23, 25 & January 1
- SOUTHMALL: December 16, 22, 23, 25 & January 1

GRAND CHRISTMAS PARADE
Get a thrill watching the grand parade of the Storyland characters featuring Ellie, Lionel, Sgt. March & Eggbert with Santa Claus and a marching band.

- FAIRVIEW: December 15, 2 PM
- SOUTHMALL: December 16, 2 PM

STORYBOOK PARADE
Join a parade of kids dressed as their favorite storybook characters!

- FAIRVIEW: December 15, 3 PM
- SOUTHMALL: December 16, 3 PM

CLUB STORYLAND CHRISTMAS PARTY
Learn "Holiday Paint-Your-Face" face painting! Enjoy "A Christmas Story" storytelling and "The Magic of Christmas" magic show. Learn "Holiday Twists" balloon twisting. Join fun games and win holiday goodies & lots 'n lots of lootbags!

- FAIRVIEW: December 16, 200 3 PM

GRAND CHRISTMAS CHORALE
Listen to a medley of merry Christmas tunes performed by different chorale groups!

- FAIRVIEW: December 23, 3 PM
- SOUTHMALL: December 22, 3 PM

MY OWN STORYBOOK WRITING CONTEST
Write and illustrate your own original storybook on the spot! Get a chance to win exciting prizes! (Contest open to all kids from 7 to 12 years old)

Join us for your best Christmas ever!

Storyland

"BAGONG BUWAN" looks more at the human than the political condition.

MONTANO (center) with Amy Austria, left, and Caridad Sanchez.

Marilou Diaz-Abaya on the making of 'Bagong Buwan'

(From page F3)

She was obsessed about the small details, being very careful not to offend anybody. "I needed my two tutors, my *ustads*, my *imam* on the set every single day, just to make sure my posture was correct, I didn't transgress or breach any cultural or Islamic doctrine. *Lagi akong may alalay. Iyung* self-consciousness *ko na iyon* was something that I had to conquer. I don't think anybody can tell the Muslim story better than the Muslims themselves. But at the moment, they don't have the means to, so I am a messenger. And I better get it right."

She also actually went in and out of the war zones and evacuation camps. Marilou relates that because she is not in good physical shape, she had difficulty negotiating the mountainous terrain. There was also the constant threat of contracting dengue. However, more then the physical hardships, she feels that it was the psychological aspect that burdened her. "*Sinabayan ko iyung* history that is still being made, and then somebody watches this and can actually kill somebody out of hatred. Whereas *yung* 'Rizal,' may closure *na iyon e. Kung magdikurso tayo, intelektwal lang iyan, di ba?*"

Responsibility

This was a tremendous responsibility on the part of the filmmaker. "But I immersed myself not only with the Muslims, but also with the soldiers," the director relates. "I realized that the sources of weeping and laughter are the same, basically. They're thinking about their mother, their wife, their children, seconds before an encounter, or at the moment of death. We're all born and die with the same emotions."

Marilou feels that the Muslims are misunderstood because people know very little about them. And of the little that is known about them, the information is usually something negative. Marilou gave the examples of the classic Muslim who runs amok, or the dynastic bangsa moro. She also feels that Muslims, not only in the Philippines, but all over the world, are not well represented.

"They're not seen, they're not heard of, they're not written about, and so there's very little information about a very powerful, unique people, and so we fear what we don't really know, much less understand. On Philippine TV, we don't hear the stories. We just count the bodies that are dead or alive and how many weaponss are still out in the field."

Family

But this film is not about issues of separatism or religion, or about the Abu Sayyaf or Nur Misuari. "It looks at the human condition, rather than the political condition—what happens to the human condition when subjected to the crossfires of the conflict. It looks at a family, rather than at the government. It looks at how the human spirit prevails over oppression and how a culture of peace can be sustained in an environment of war.

"Specifically it looks at Cesar Montano as a physician, whose obligation is to heal Christians and Muslims *and* Lumads, and that obligation is tested when he has to return home to Mindanao," explains Marilou,

"*Ang kalaban ng mga tao sa* 'Bagong Buwan,' *specifically ay yung mga bala. Iyon yung* point ng film," Marilou states.

She shares that her set was virtually a peace zone in itself. "We were working with real Marines, and we were working with Muslim people who had been at one time or were still active in the MILF. All firearms were deposited outside the set."

Prayers

Marilou's set also followed the Muslim practice of praying five times a day. "It's really a very good way to stop whatever it is you're doing and to just keep quiet. I learned the value of silence in doing the film. But the discipline and the rule that I set in shooting, anyway, of having to stop five times a day, to give them time to pray. I encouraged the Catholics to pray their Angelus at 6." Marilou worshipped at the mosques but still attended Catholic mass once a week as well. She says she didn't consider converting to Islam because Islam has actually enhanced her being a Catholic.

The working title of the film was "Mindanao". However, Marilou decided to change it to "Bagong Buwan" for three reasons. "First, I thought it was not going to be fair to the whole of Mindanao. If it backfired, it would not be fair. Secondly, I'm really looking only at Cotabato, during the all-out war. Thirdly, because I felt 'Bagong Buwan,' which means 'new moon' is a good metaphor for hope. I mean, you don't see the new moon, it's at its darkest. And the Muslim (moon) is a crescent. The *buwan* motif is what interested me."

Festival film

Marilou denies that she made this film specifically for the film festival. "I made this for Mindanao. It just happened to be finished in time for the festival. Last year, I didn't do a festival movie because I was already immersed in this project."

She says that after the showing of "Muro-Ami" two years ago, Margie Moran-Floirendo gave her a call. She had just watched the film and was touched by Marilou's work. She then asked Marilou if they could do something similar for the children of Mindanao. Marilou continues, "So I said, 'A film?' And she said yes. I asked 'What's your agenda?' And she said, 'Peace'." Marilou immediately accepted, even though she had planned to take a sabbatical that year.

However, she admits that the best venue for "Bagong Buwan" would be a film festival, specifically the Metro Manila film festival, which falls during the holidays. "The holy seasons predispose the audiences. The holy seasons of Ramadan and Advent are basically seasons where you're disposed to forgive, to reconcile, to think of children to be even spiritual, so I think, more than 'Jose Rizal' and 'Muro-Ami,' 'Bagong Buwan' needs this Christmas season, *kasi segue iyan*, from Ramadan to Christmas, so *may* disposition *nang ganoon* – forgive your enemies, love your family, *iyan yung mga pinagkakaabalahan natin sa* Christmas."

Maligayang Pasko
at Mapayapang
Bagong Taon!

Junior INQUIRER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2001 ◆ 16 PAGES ◆ VOLUME 5, NUMBER 62

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- Shirley's Pets Page 15

JI Christmas Special
INQUIRER
OUTSTANDING CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER!
MALIGAYANG BATI!!

WORLD SCOPE

Scuba Santa

A DIVER in a Santa costume shows up underwater to feed rays and fishes in a decorated aquarium. The shopping mall that features this sight has drawn quite an audience every Christmas season for this very unusual aquatic show. *AP*

'Parol' Time

HERE at home, Christmas is not complete without those colorful, Christmas lanterns hung at home and along the streets. In the picture, worker Alberto Oclarit arranges a Christmas lantern display made from abaca fibers at the Rizal Park. *AP*

Manila, Philippines
Tokyo, Japan
The Vatican, Rome
New York, USA
Bangkok, Thailand

'Feliz Navidad! Bono Natale!'

POPE John Paul II waves to college students as he arrives for a special Mass for Roman university students in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. During the service, the pontiff joked with the students and wished them a "Merry Christmas" in several languages. *AP*

Christmassy Monster

GODZILLA doesn't seem to mind as a Thai worker decorates him in bright-colored tinsel to celebrate Christmas. Would a red, blinking nose look good on him too? *AP*

Patriotic Christmas

AN AMERICAN flag flies in front of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree in New York. Americans have said that they feel closer as a nation after surviving the Sept. 11 terrorist attack. In a patriotic gesture, the tree's light this year are red, white and blue. *AP*

OUT
THERE
By Marlet D. Salazar

Got something for Out There?
Send us the info two weeks in advance. Our fax numbers are 897-4793 up to 94. Don't forget to include your contact numbers and addresses.

Contests

KID-KALIKASAN. If you are 7-12 years old who love the environment and like to draw join the "Kabundukan, Ilog at Dagat Kalikasan" poster making contest. Contestants must be residents of Bicol, Eastern and Central Visayas, or in the Caraga region. For more important info call up the following Community-Based Resource Management Project office near you: CBRMP-Bicol 3F ANST. Bldg., Washington Drive, Legazpi City, Tel. (052) 481-4562; CBRMP-Central Visayas 5F BF Bldg. N. Escario St., Cebu city, Tel. (032) 412-6745; CBRMP-Eastern Visayas 2F Timo Romano Bldg., Real St. Sagkahan District, Tacloban City, Tel. (053) 321-1388; CBRMP-Caraga 3F Aguilar Bldg. Pili Drive, Butuan City, Tel. (085) 815-0320; and CBRMP-Central Office 7F EDPC Bldg., Department of Finance, BSP Complex, Roxas Blvd. Malate, Manila, Tel. (02) 526-7335, 523-6325 or send an email to folay@info.com.ph

TEEN LIT CAMP. Adarna House and Filipinas Heritage Library invite teens ages 13-16 to submit their works in fiction, essay or poetry, and vie for a slot in the 2nd Annual Teen Lit Camp. It is a weeklong out-of-town camp for teen writers. The Camp will feature talks by well-known writers, discussions, and other activities related to writing. For more info, call up 372-3548 or 49 or send an email to adarnahouse@adarna.com.ph

ILLUSTRATORS' PRIZE. Would you like to illustrate a winning story? Join Philippine Board on Books for Young People's 2002 PBBY Illustrators' Prize. Entries must be based on the winning story "Uuwi Na ang Nanay Kong si Darna" by Edgar Samar. Get your copies from the PBBY secretariat. The winner will receive P25,000, a gold medal and an opportunity to be published. For more important details call up PBBT at 372-3548 or 49, or send an email to pbby@adarna.com.ph. You can also drop by their office at 73-A Scout Limbaga St., Barangay Laging Handa, Quezon City. Deadline is on Feb. 15, 2002.

Activities

CHRISTMAS TREATS. Have a fun-filled day at the grand atrium of Shangri-La Plaza mall as Big and Small Co. and Sacred Heart School bring you "Once Upon a Royal Birth" today at 10 a.m. There will be a storytelling session by the Alitaptap Storytellers Club and on-the-spot coloring contest. Categories are divided into age groups, and materials for the contest will be provided including a smock which will serve as the uniform. For more info call up 813-7928 or 894-4172.

Workshops

LITTLE MASTERS CLUB. Faber-Castell invites all elementary pupils to join their art club called Little Masters Club. You can join their art workshops and exhibits, meet new friends, receive newsletters with info about art workshops in schools, museums and malls, upcoming events and join contests. Registration is ongoing. For more info please call Ms Jane Ebarle at 361-7391 to 92.

Stuff

ENCHANTED KINGDOM TREATS. Get hold of the new Enchanted Kingdom offerings called the "Christmas Bundle," it is a value-for-money Christmas gift idea which comes in handy in colorful envelope containing one Ride-All-You-Can Ticket worth P400; P150 worth of Wizard Money—EK'S new gift certificate in P50 and P100 which may be used to purchase tickets, food, or merchandise inside the park; and 2002 pocket calendar.

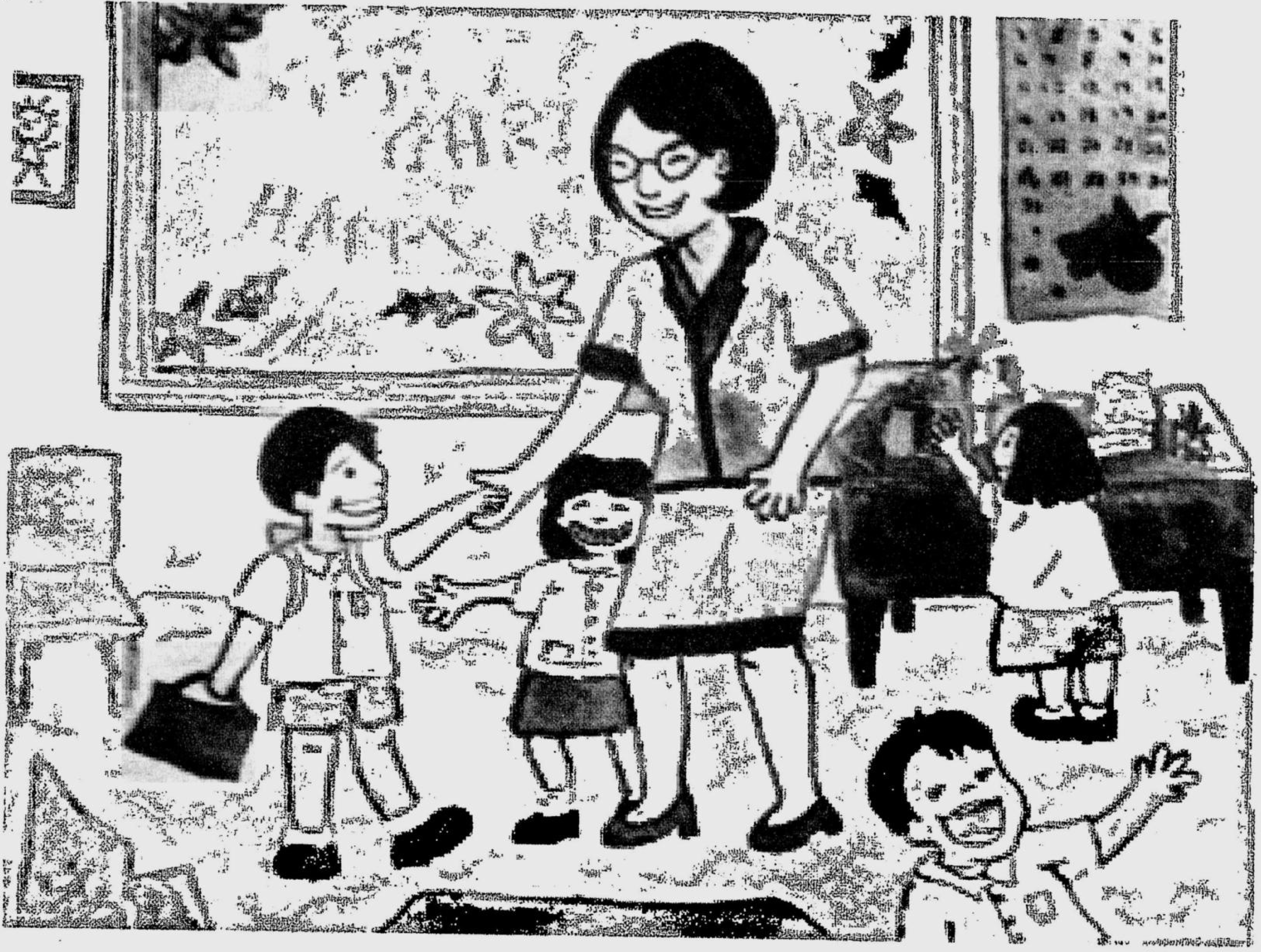
FREE E-POSTCARDS. Get free e-postcards created by budding artists Natasha and Valerie Luistro from St. Theresa's College. Send an e-mail to endo@philonline.com or call 416-9051 and 414-1954. The postcards are produced by the Kids at Art Summer Workshop.

COKE, HARRY POTTER AND READING. For every Coke that you drink, one point is credited to a public school library. A total of 250 points provides that library with one book. Ten lucky public libraries have been chosen as beneficiaries by the Department of Education. And to make this promotion even better, you can win prizes for every Coca-Cola purchase you make such as notebooks, bookmarks, stickers, Harry Potter backpacks and P20 discounts on Harry Potter movie tickets. So get out there and buy a Coke, win a prize and help a public school build its library!

Cable Picks

XMAS WITH THE MUPPETS. Join the muppets as they play Yuletide ambassadors on Star Movies with "The Muppet Christmas Carol." The hilarious adaptation of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" stars Kermit the frog as Bob Crachit and the only human in the film—Michael Caine—plays Scrooge. Don't miss it on Dec. 25 at 9 p.m. on Star Movies.

BAH! TWIDDLE-BUGS! Kermit and Michael Caine in "A Christmas Carol."



Untitled

By Jose Bawagan
Illustration by Isa Nazareno

For teachers like you
Who work with all heart
I'll tell you my story
Right from the start

The first time I saw you
Was the first day of school
I said, "Who's my teacher?
I hope that she's cool!"

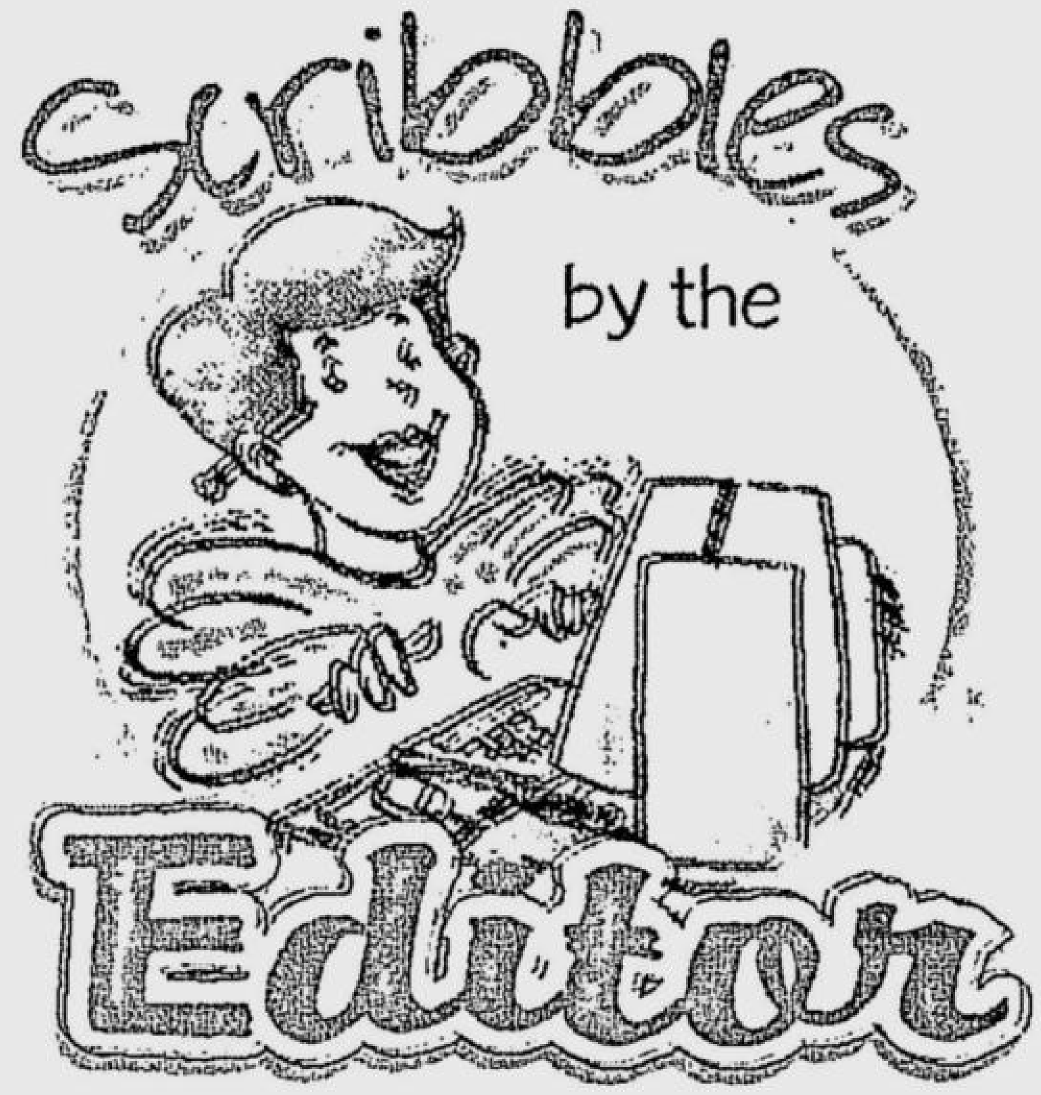
Then I saw you
"I don't know you yet,
but I will soon know you
when the time comes, I bet!

As the weeks flew
I learned and I thought
"My adviser is cool,
as cool as she ought!"

Now here comes the time
That I should disclose
My opinion of You
Here it is, and it goes:

I love you, my teacher!
I love you and hear:
A Wonderful Christmas
and a Happy New Year!

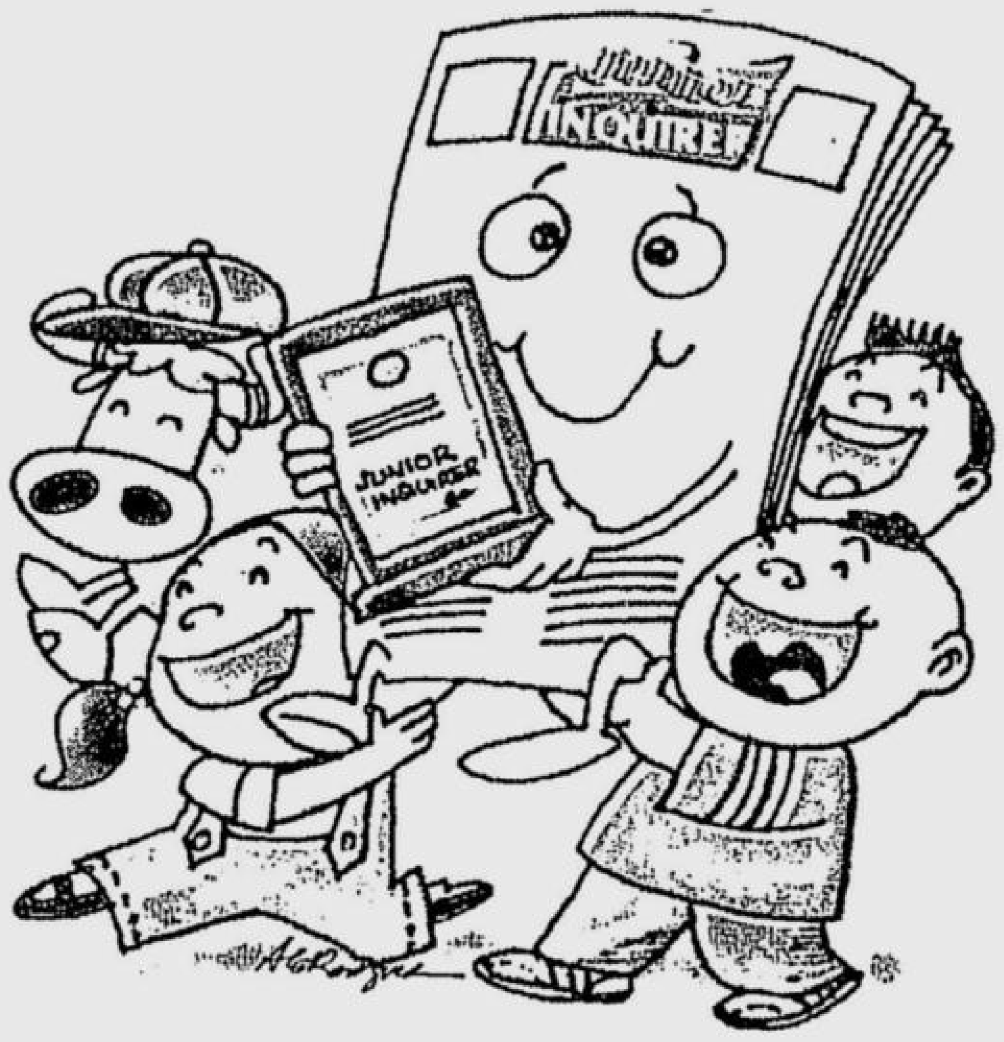
__Jose__, 12, studies at Claret School in Quezon City.
__Isa__ is currently taking up her MA in Art History at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. She is a member of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan.



DEAR Kids,

Did you hear the news? Junior Inquirer—you newspaper—was awarded as the Outstanding Newspaper for Children. This citation was given by no less than by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), the Philippine Press Institute (PIA) and the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication and the Philippine Information Agency (AIJC). Whew! Those are a lot of serious organizations there.

Here's what Ms Ann C. Lopez, AIJC Associate Director and Awards Project Manager had to say about us: "JI stood out for exemplary commitment to produce a newspaper for children and of children. A really singular effort."



Another good news is JI's former staff writer, Christine Rivero also won an award for Best Feature Writer on Children.

Our contributor, Macie Mendigo, was also awarded Outstanding Child Writer for her piece "Me and My Dyslexia" which appeared in the March 24, 2001 issue of JI.

So, congratulations to all young writers whose work appeared on JI! And congratulations too to all grown-ups who've given their talents to this newsmagazine! You all know that you're part of the reason why all those organizations chose to give us the award.

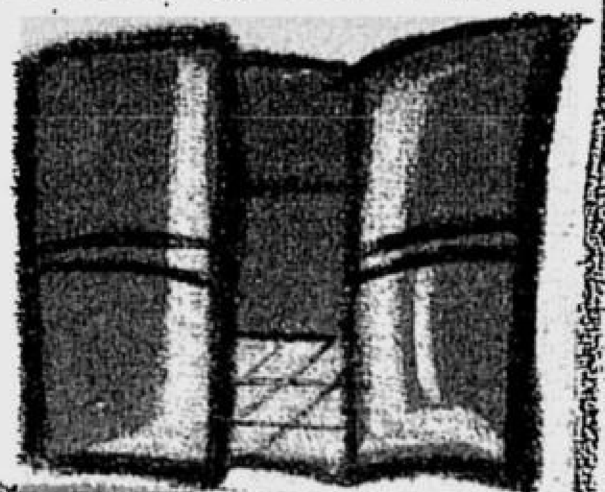
Now go on and have a very Merry Christmas and we all know it's going to be a very good New Year for all of us!

Cheers,

The Editor

Straight from JI Readers

You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **ji@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!



Your Smile

ONCE again, Christmas is in the air. Glowing Christmas lanterns are sold here and there. Christmas trees are seen in many homes. Christmas is the most awaited time of the year. I think everybody can celebrate this season with a smile. After all, it's one of the best and most simple ways to spread love. And I think something as simple as this can change many things for the better. —**THERECIA MAE S. CHAVEZ**, 11, Assumption School, Antipolo

SPREAd the LOVE

Letter from Kentucky

I'M FROM the Philippines and this is my second year living in the USA. I just want to say that JI Online is the best website for kids who loved to read and write stories. The first story I read in JI is "Inay" (JI, July 31, 1999) and "My Father the Mighty Elephant" (JI, Nov. 18, 2000).

The moral lesson of these stories and poems inspire me to read all your stories every week. I really can't call myself a reader but every time I read a short story with good moral lessons, it makes me want to read a book.

But I don't have time to read many books because of all the homework I need to finish. But I want to thank all the people who put out JI each week. —**APRIL PATRIARCA**, 14, Casey County Middle School, Liberty, Kentucky, USA

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Junior Inquirer (JI) welcomes your views, suggestions, essays, short stories and poems. All contributions must be typewritten double-spaced on short bond paper. Contributions without a self-addressed, stamped envelope will not be returned.

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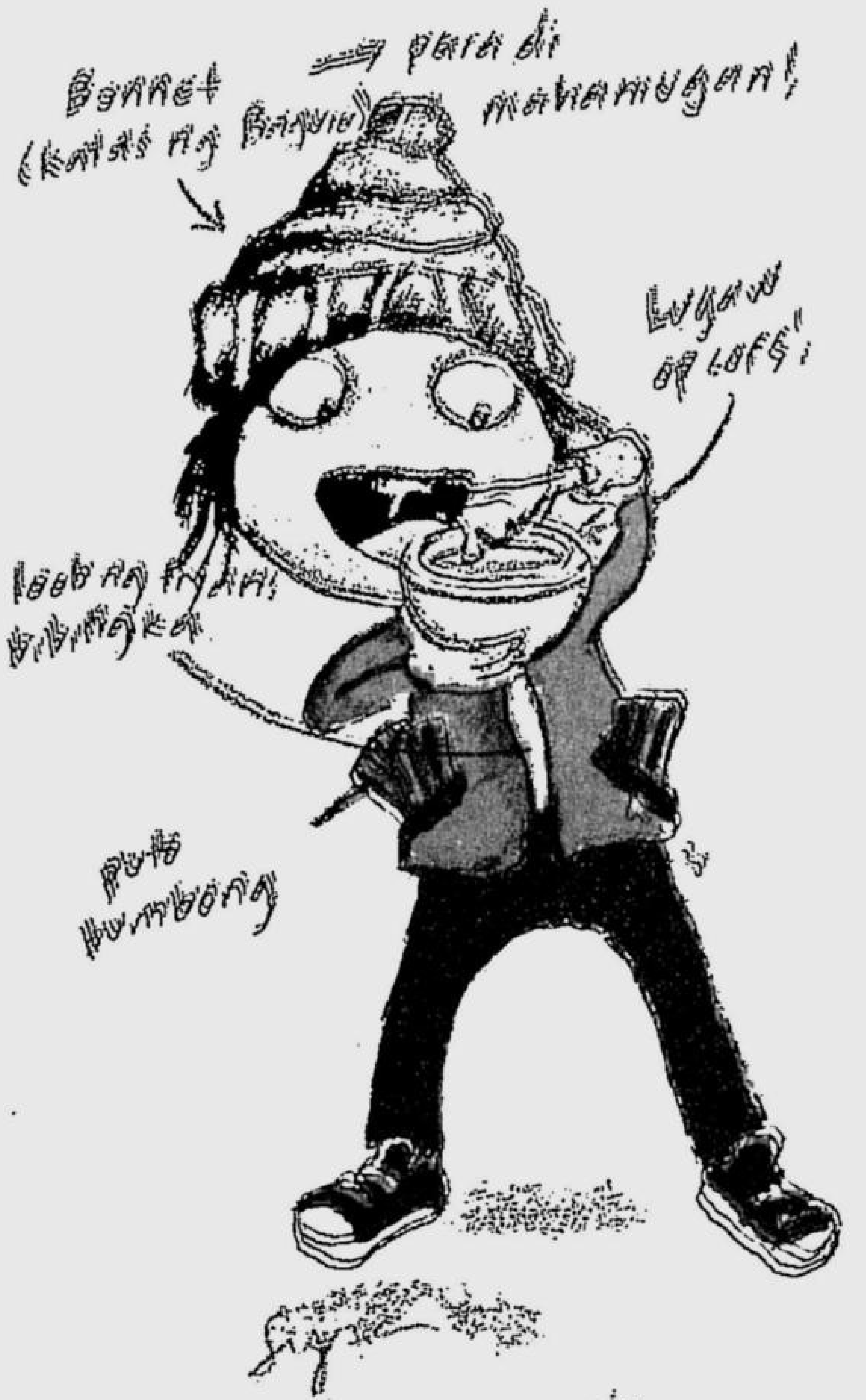
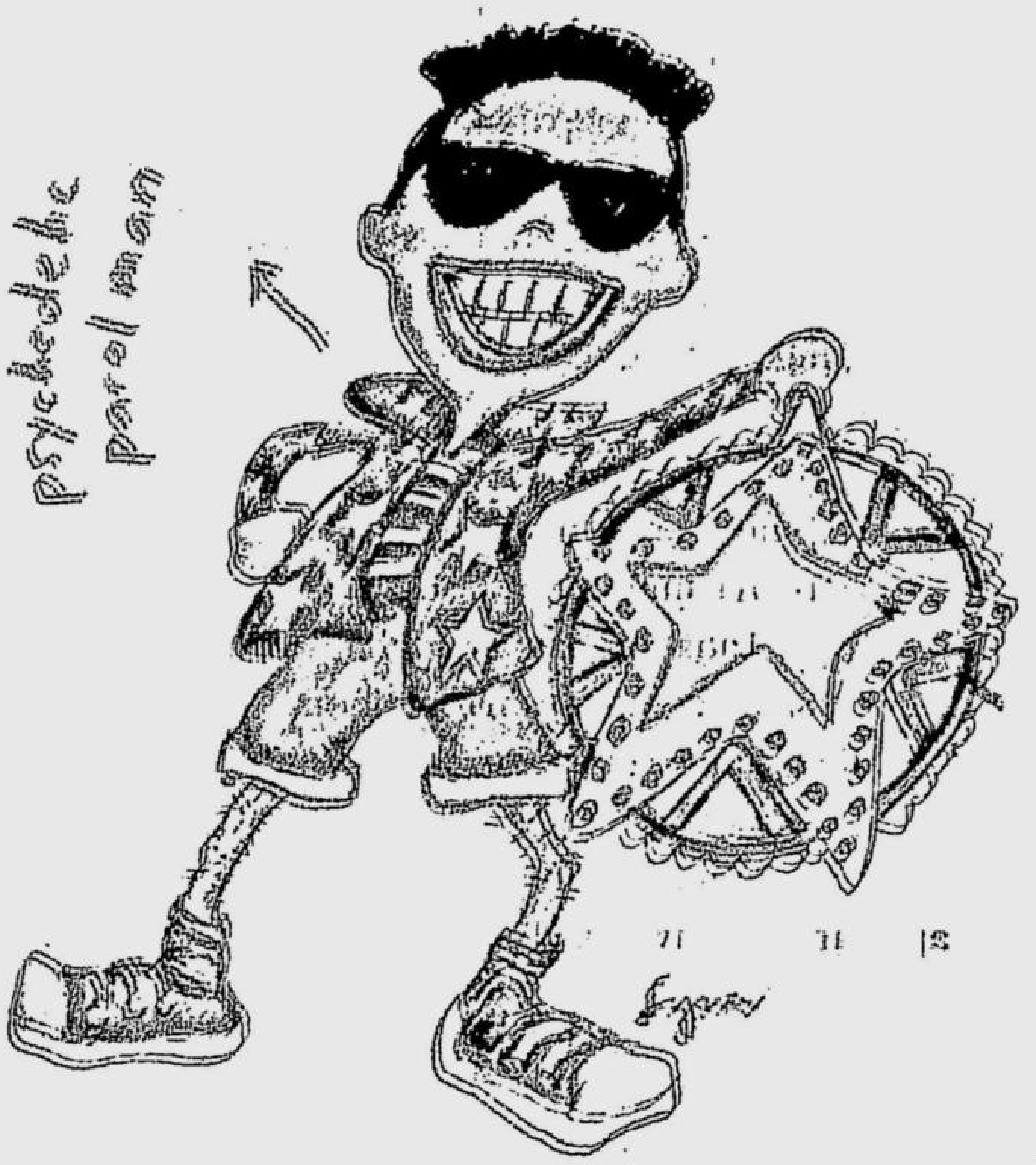
Ang Pasko sa Amin

Ni Genaro R. Gojo Cruz
Guhit ni Lyra Abueg Garcellano

Parol

Tila mga bituing bumaba mula sa langit.
Nagsabit sa mga bintana,
Tarangkahan, puno at poste,
Kikislap-kislap.
Patay-sindi parang mga alitaptap.
Kay sarap tignan.
Kay inam pagmasdan.
Lalo na sa gabing kay lamig
at tanging taglay niyang ilaw-dagitab
ang gabay sa paglalakad.





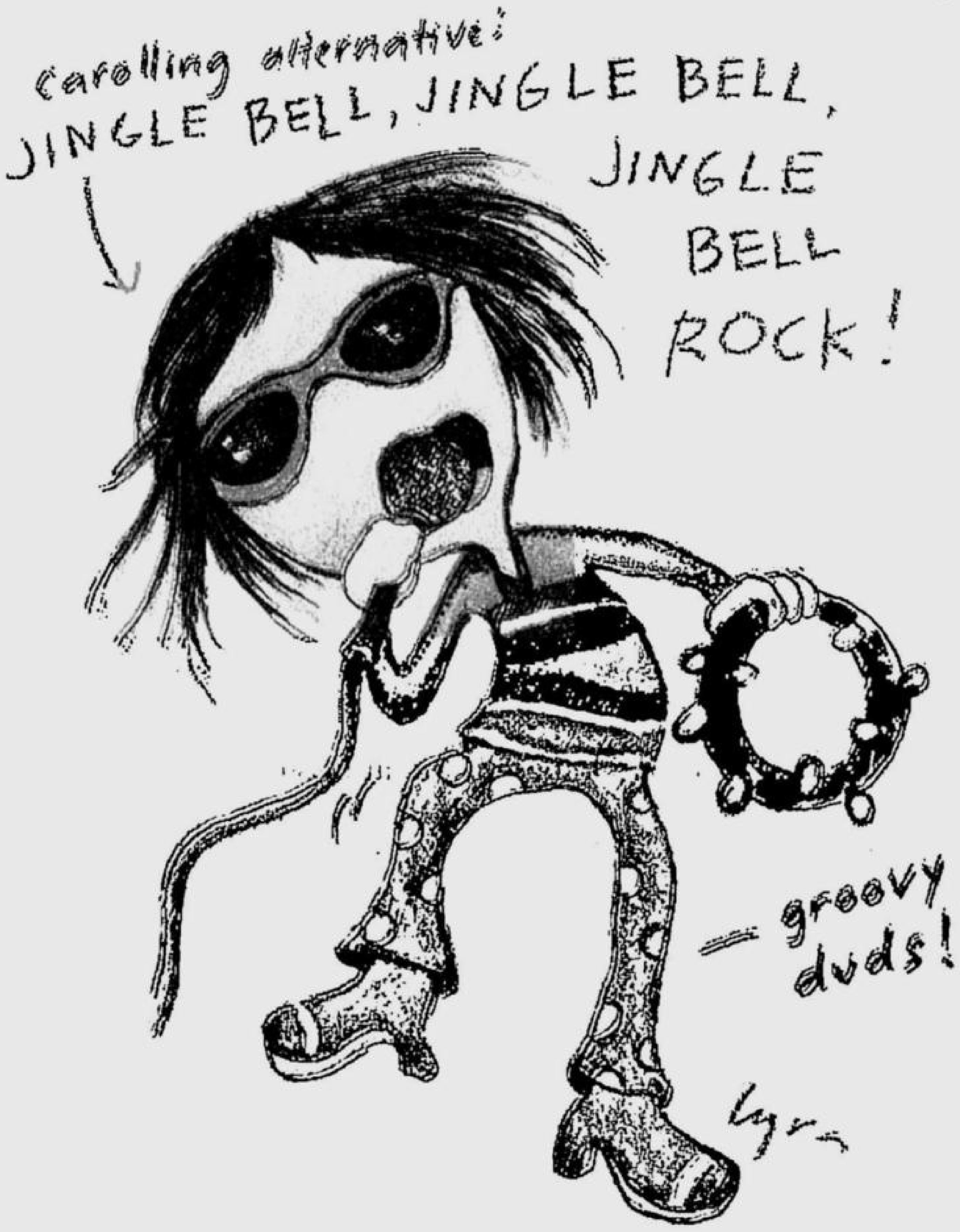
Ang Simbang Gabi

Kahit mahirap gumising sa madaling-araw,
pilit pa ring gigising upang pakinggan
ang tunog ng lumang kampana ng simbahan.
Dadalhin ni Lola ang kanyang rosaryo at bandana
at saka ako aakayin upang hindi mawala.
Punung-puno ng tao ang simbahan,
Taos-pusong nakikinig at nagdarasal.
Sa labas ng simbahan,
di mawawala ang puto-bumbong,
penoy at balot, maging lugaw na mainit.
Pamawi ng antok
at lamig na bumabalot sa katawan.
Kay sayang magsimbang-gabi,
Dahil nakikita ko ang aking mga kaibigan
at ka-eskwela na matagal na di makakasama.
Higit sa lahat, kay sarap humiling
ng mga mumunting hiling tulad ng,
sana sa Pasko bawat miyembro ng pamilya
ay makapiling.

Ang Regalo

Ang saya-sayang magbalot ng mga regalo.
Magagara at mga disenyuhang papel at laso.
Hindi na mahalaga kung mura o mahal
ang lamang ng mga ito,
ang mahalaga'y makapagbigay
kahit papaano,
maibahagi ang aginaldo sa ibang tao,
ang naging biyaya sa loob ng isang taon.

Kay gandang pagmasdan ng mga regalo
sa ilalim ng malaking Christmas Tree
na puno ng butil ng liwanag at dekorasyon;
may iba't-ibang kulay ng bola,
may mga anghel na tila lumilipad,
may maliliit na regalo at magagandang laso.
Sa ituktok ay makikita ang isang malaking tala.
Hihilinging sana'y dumating na ang taong
Pagbibigyan ng pinaghirapang regalo.

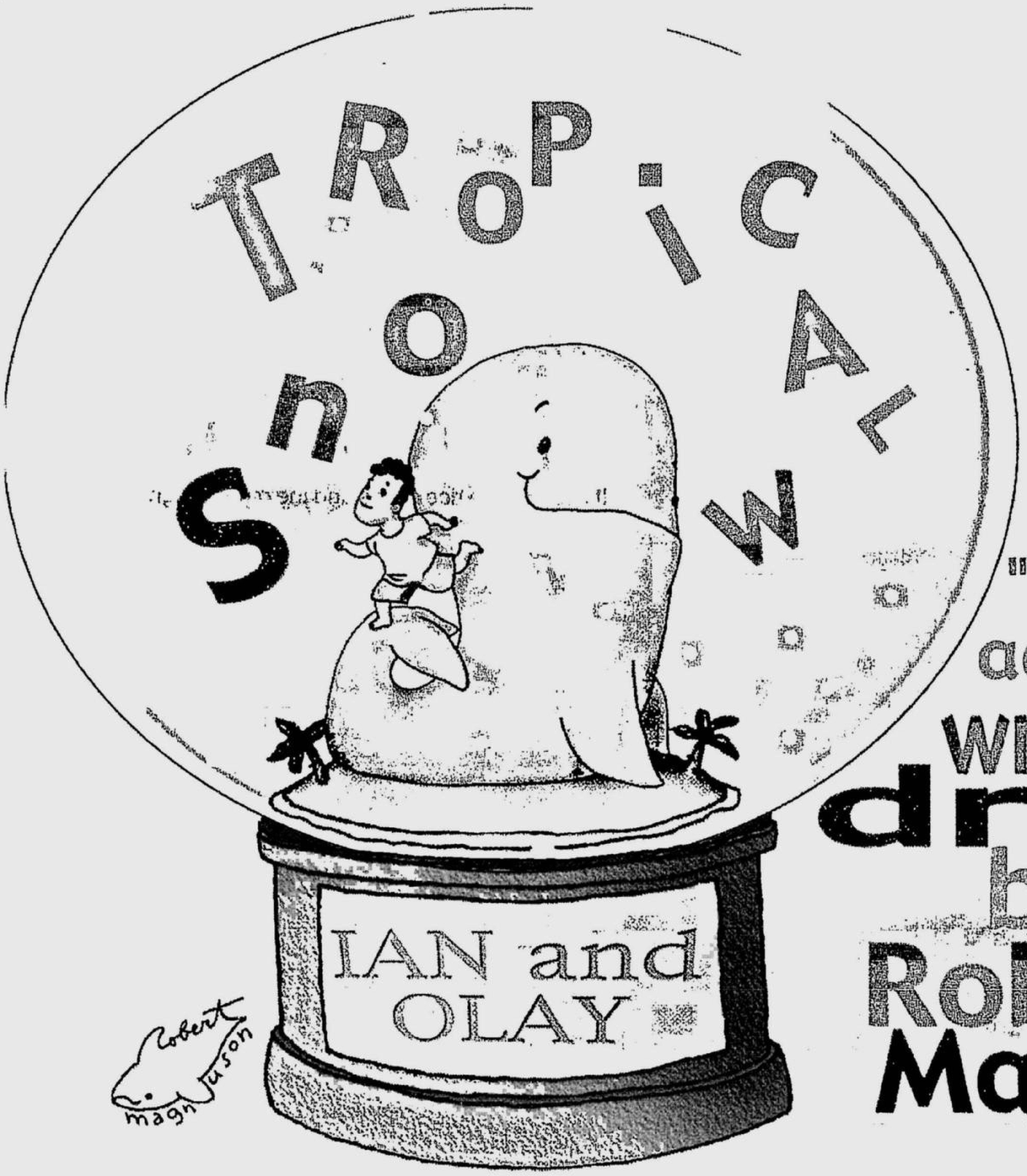


Ang Caroling

Kahit mga boses ay sintunado at namamaos
sa dami ng bahay ng hinandugan
ng mga pamaskong awitan,
masayang-masaya pa rin kami
sa pag-awit ng mga awiting tuwing Disyembre
lamang mapapakinggan.

Bawat tahana'y nagbubukas ng pintuan
upang pakinggan
ang mga batang masayang nag-aawitan
sa saliw ng pinitpit
at pinagsama-samang tansan,
pinupukpok na lata ng gatas,
at tinatambol na tabong butas.
Lahat ay namamangha
sa pinagsama-samang tunog.
Kay sarap pakinggan ng mga tinig
na tila nagmumula
sa mga anghel sa langit.
Matapos ang pag-awit, iaabot ang munting handog
sa mga batang di nakakalimutang magpasalamat
sa kapwa at kay Hesus.

TROPICAL SNOW



AN "IAN and OLAY" adventure
written & drawn by
Robert Magnuson

The new Christmas season was curious and strange.
Everyday it was hot, with no sign of rain.
Ian sat on the back of his whale pal, Olay
as they talked about things that were far far away.

"I've heard from my dad that when Christmas is near,
in lands that are farther than islands near here,
that a soft gentle rain made of fluff and of ice
falls down to the ground and makes everything nice."

"I hear that the children there have lots of fun!
They play in the snow and then when they're done,
they pile up the snow just as fast as they can
and build figurines that resemble a man.

"I think that's the weather our Christmas could use!
No sweating, no panting, no stickyness too!
If I had a gift I could give to this town,
I'd give us some snow to cool us all down!"

"But how will you manage this impossible feat?
To create such a thing so amazing and neat?
You're just a small boy, and I'm merely a whale.
And this feat's on the greatest and grandest of scales!"

"Well snow is just water that's turned very cold
Like the ice in our freezers, is what I've been told.
So we'll need a few freezers—like a hundred or so.
That should be enough if we are to make snow.

So late in the day with the sun hanging low,
the two climbed a mountain with freezers in tow.
When they got to the top, Ian flipped on the switch,
and the freezers, they hummed with nary a hitch.

The hundred machines, they started to hold,
and with doors open wide, they let out a cold
that swept through the clouds hanging over the town
and then one by one, raindrops came falling down.

But the rain wasn't liquid! It looked much like "flakes,"
like the white crystal shavings an ice freezer makes.
As they fell from the sky, Ian smiled with delight
for a cool Christmas Season was starting tonight!

Down in the town near the church by the street,
Aling Cora made rice cakes for townfolks to eat.
Mang Arman sold lanterns in a stall right next door,
which were all hung and lit from the ceiling til floor.

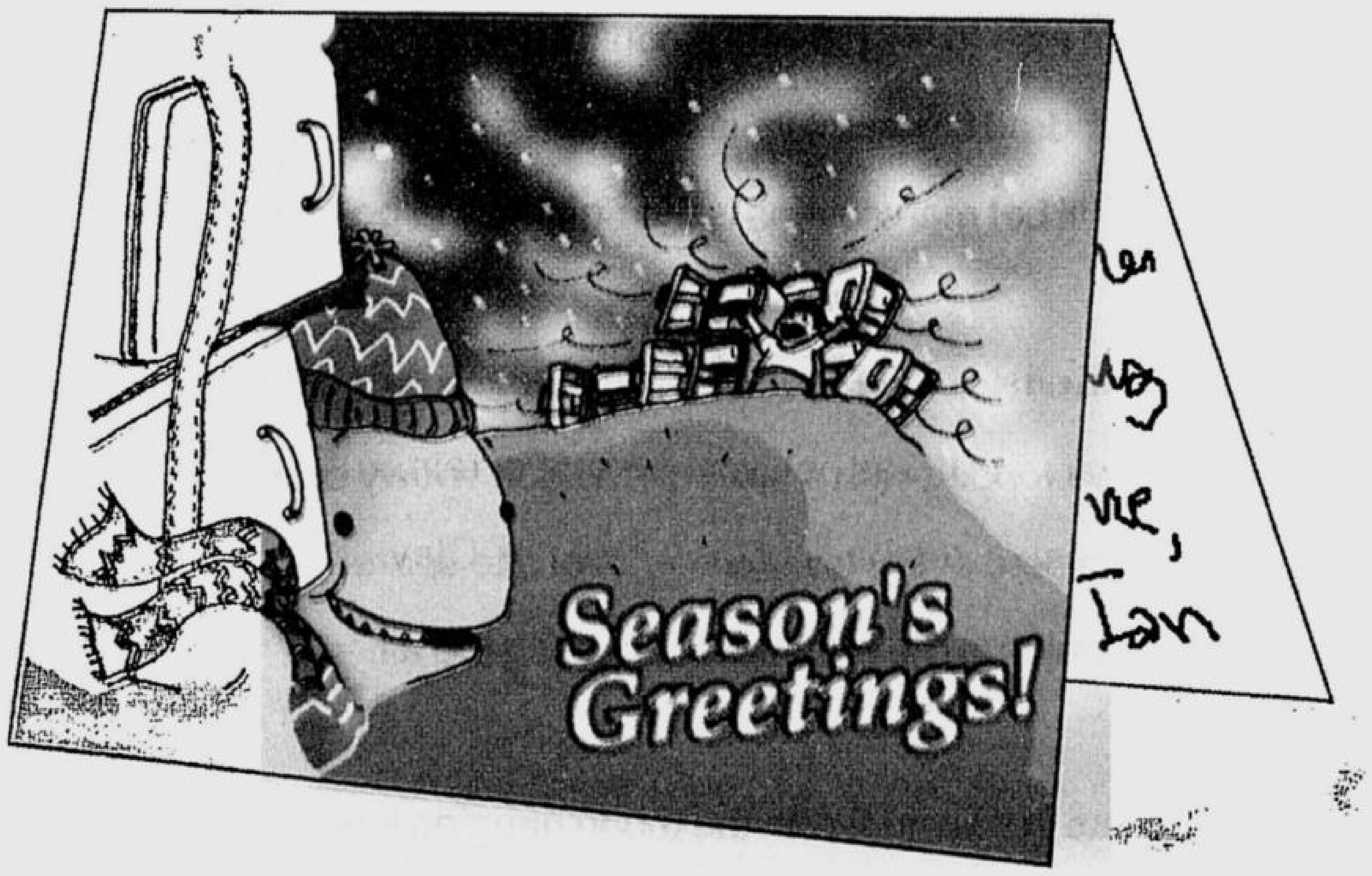
It was Mang Arman's nose that got the first shiver
when touched by a tiny white snowy flake sliver!
They all scratched their heads wondering how it could be
that the air was now dropping a couple degrees.

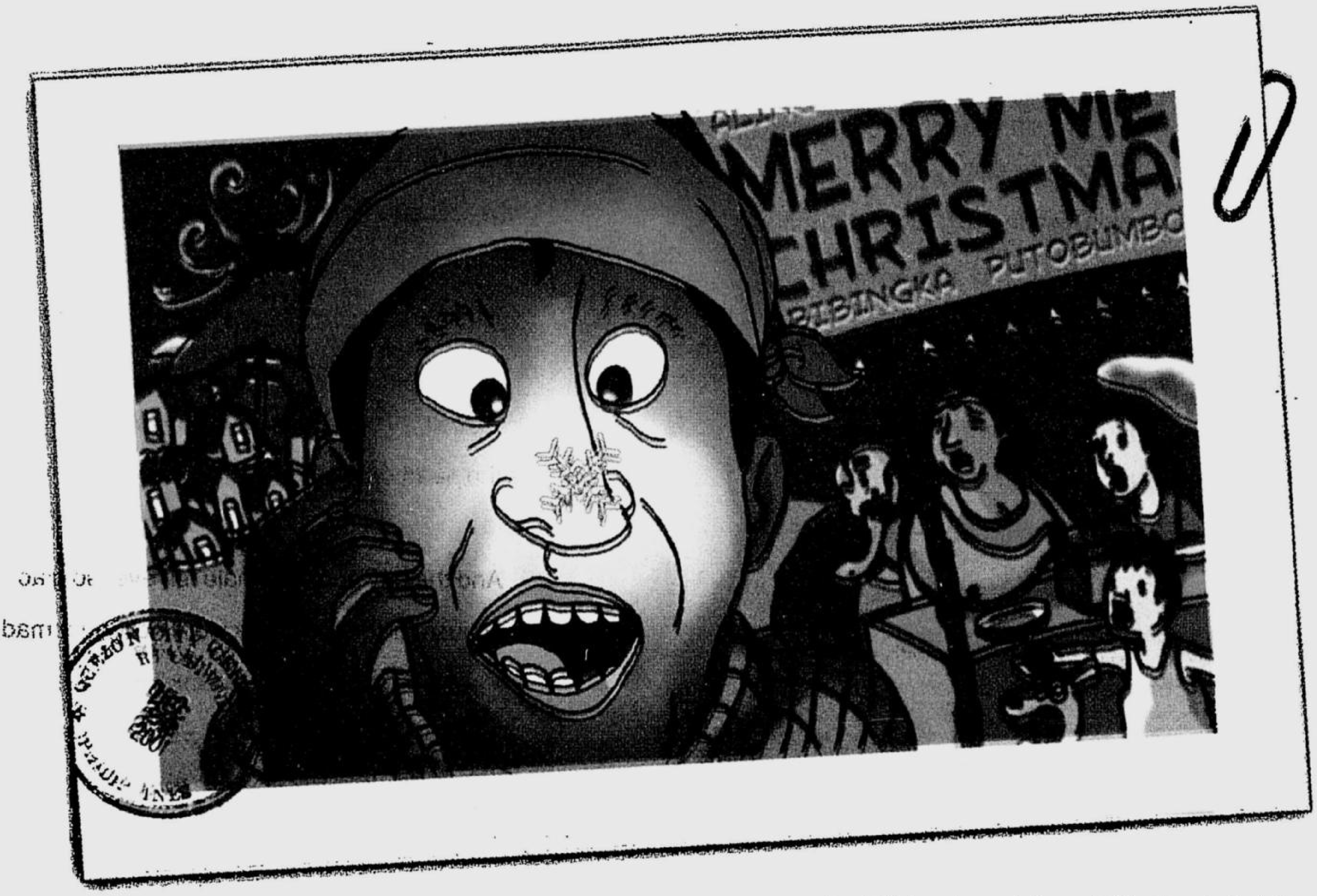
Mang Arman exclaimed, "This cold isn't good!"
Aling Cora complaind: "It's freezing my food!"
And the ice kept on coming with no end in sight!
It froze up the rice cakes and the other delights.

The land turned to white and the waters were ice,
the air became thin and it started to bite.
And the tropical people without coats and boots,
they tried to stay warm by standing in groups.

"I think we have erred," Olay said with a gulp
for down in the town people cried out for help.
"A tropical Christmas is better when warm
if the snow is creating less good than harm."

Next page please. . .





If we don't stop the snow, our town will be through!
Things are getting much worse! Oh what can we do?
As Olay did worry, Ian worked hard to find
the spark of a plan that formed inside his mind.

"I've got it, Olay! A plan that will work!"
Ian said to his pal with a confident smirk.
"If a hundred big freezers is what can make snow,
then I'll bet many ovens is the right way to go!"

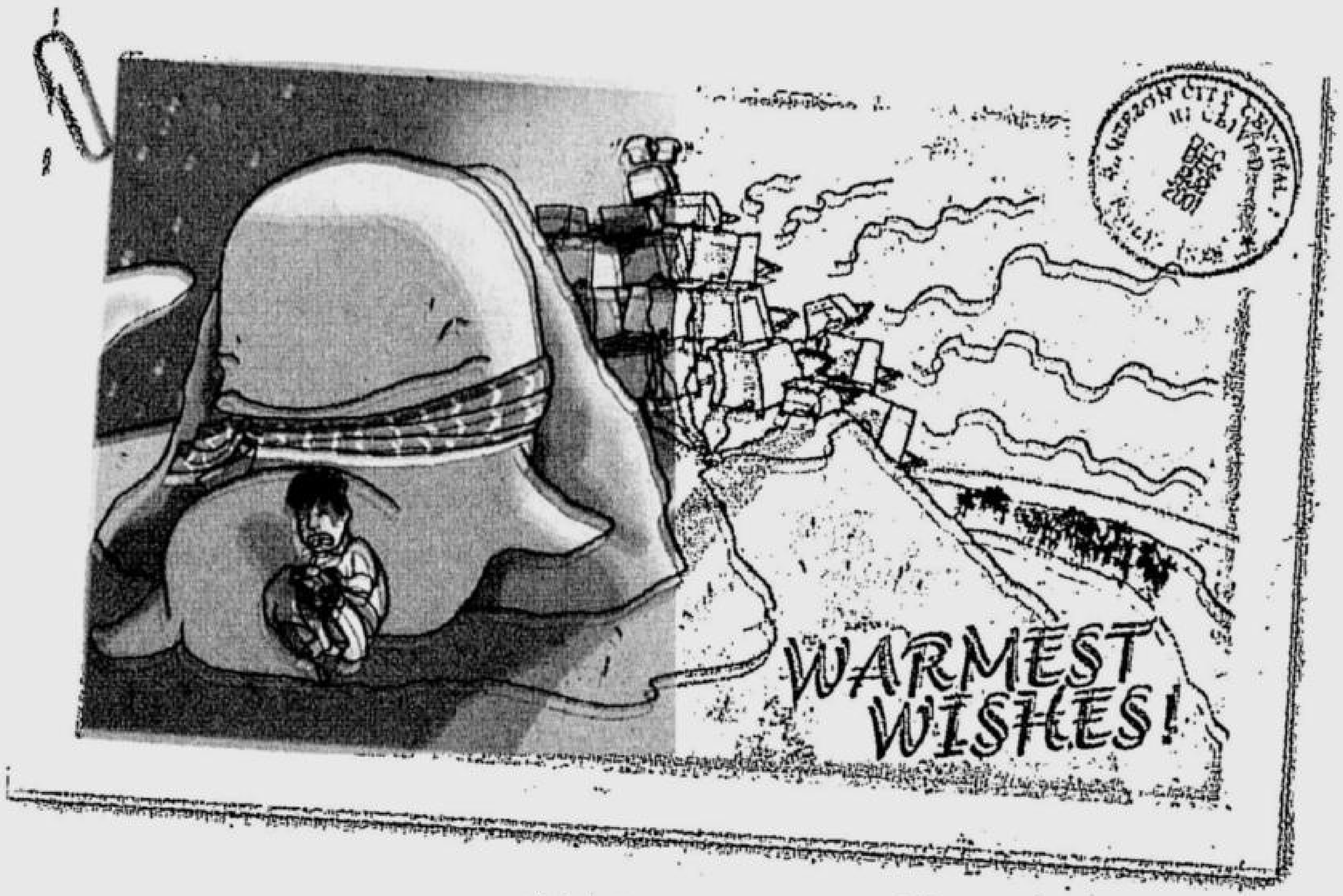
So they rushed down the mountain riding freezers for sleds
And they stopped with a splat on the soft snowy bed.
Ian asked every townfolk for ovens to spare
to send up the mountain to heat up the air.

So late in the night with the moon hanging low,
the two climbed the mountain with ovens in tow.
When they got to the top, knowing what was a stake,
Ian turned each knob fully from "Light brown" to "Bake"!

And soon as he did, a wave started to spread
it was hot and it melted the snow overhead.
The heat sank right down to the land deep below,
and it started to melt the thick beddings of snow.

And you'd think that this melting would cause quite a flood,
But not even a grain of soil turned into mud!
So hot was this heat—it made water from snow,
And it vaporized water before it could flow!

And in only four hours, their troubles had stopped,
and the town was as tropical dry as a rock.
And when Ian and Olay came down from their perch,
they found that the townsfolk gathered right by the church.



The town turned to Ian and Olay with stares
that made the friends feel as though nobody cared
for the plan that they hatched on this season of heat
even if it was meant as a cool Christmas treat.

With a deeping sigh, and a forehead of worry,
Ian said "It was me. I made snow, and I'm sorry."
But Olay broke through: "No, get mad at me!
If I hadn't helped him, no snow would you see!"

"Besides how can a boy haul freezers in tow?
You need whale-powered strength to make this plan so!"
"But I thought up the plan!" Ian tried to explain.
And that's why I'm guilty—it came from my brain!"

As they argued the matter, each friend raised their voice,
Til the townfolks broke out in a curious noise.
And Ian and Olay were shocked at the sight
of a town that was laughing with all of their might!

"It's Christmas dear boy, and dear cute giant whale!"
every townfolk, in unison, said without fail.
"If anything's certain, you gave us all pause
to feel blessed that our season is special becasue—

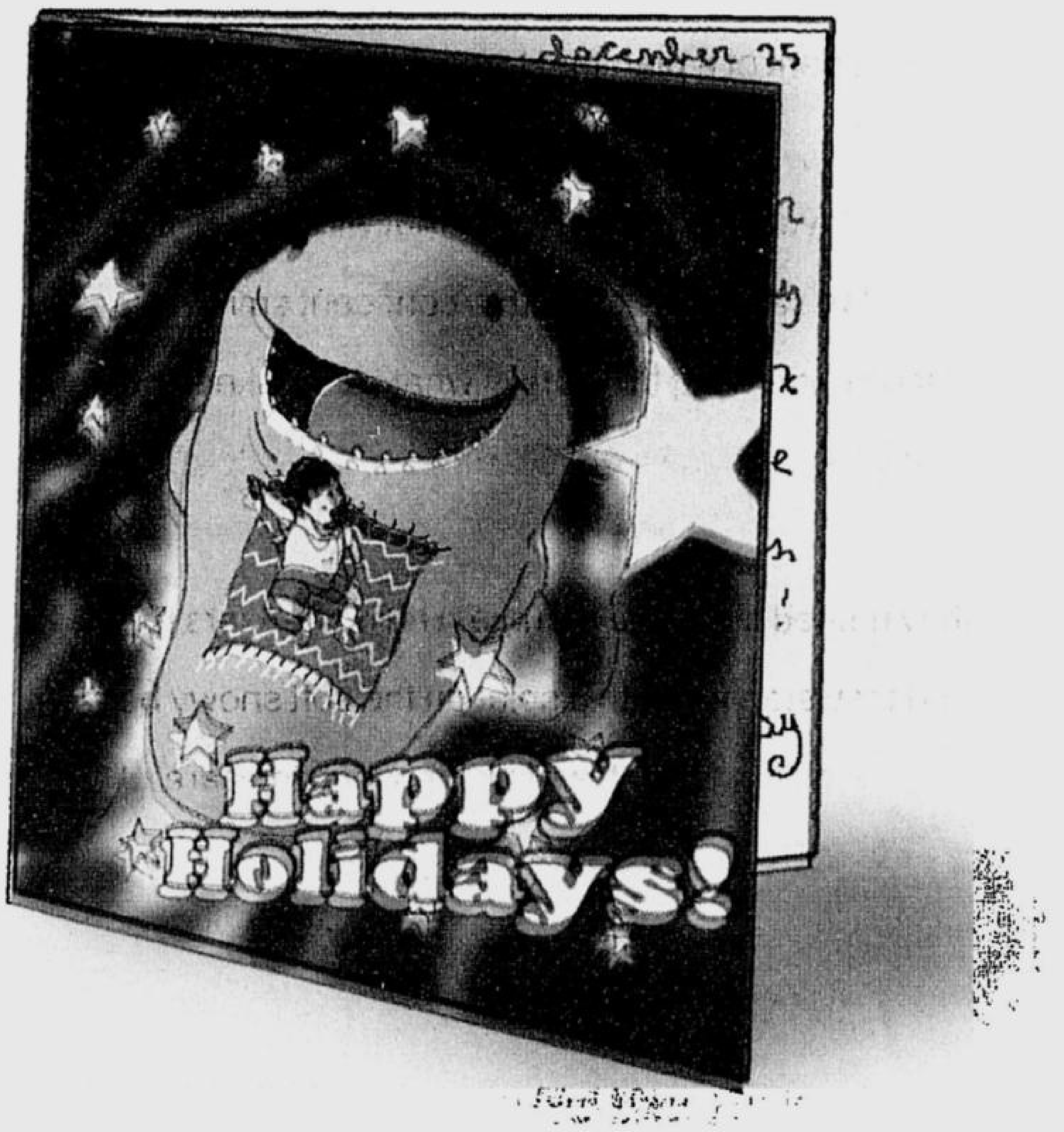
"Our town it has rice cakes, and lanterns and friends
and a season each year that brings good will to men.
Where mothers and fathers and children grow near,
a season where eyes aren't blurred by their tears.

And it sure doesn't matter if it's hot or it's cold,
or if Chiristmas has snow in far lands, like we're told.
What's important is Christmas be found in a land
that's the heart of each child, of each woman and man."

And the boy and the whale felt ever so glad,
because all the townsfolk were no longer mad.
And after they all took the midnight to pray,
the whale and the boy soon went on their way.

They walked down the road and went back to the beach,
and they stared at the stars, which were far from their reach.
They then fell asleep beneath the tropical moon,
as a warm Christmas season would be with them soon.

The End.



ThinkathoN?
BY BONG BARRAMEDA

The Languages of Christmas

"MERRY CHRISTMAS" may be said in different ways by different peoples around the world, but the spirit remains the same. In each number, would you know which language corresponds to the given translation of "Merry Christmas"?

1. Joyeux Noël

   ● German ● French

2. Feliz Navidad

   ● Spanish ● Italian

3. Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan

   ● Chinese ● Korean

4. Buone Feste Natalizie

   ● Italian ● Spanish

5. Frohe Weihnachten!

   ● German ● Swedish

6. Shinnen omedeto. Kurisumasu Omedeto

   ● Chinese ● Japanese

7. Idah Saidan Wa Sanah Jadidah

   ● Arabic ● Hindi

8. Srozhdestovm Kristovim

   ● Hebrew ● Russian

9. Selamat Hari Natal

   ● Indonesian ● Hawaiian

10. Sooksun Wan Christmas

    ● Korean ● Thai

11. Nollaig Shona Dhuit

    ● Irish ● Welsh

12. Natale hilare et Annum Faustum!

    ● Greek ● Latin

13. Geseënde Kersfees

    ● Dutch ● Afrikaans

14. Kuwa na Krismasi njema

    ● Tahitian ● Swahili

15. Kala Christouyenna!

    ● Greek ● Latin

Answers

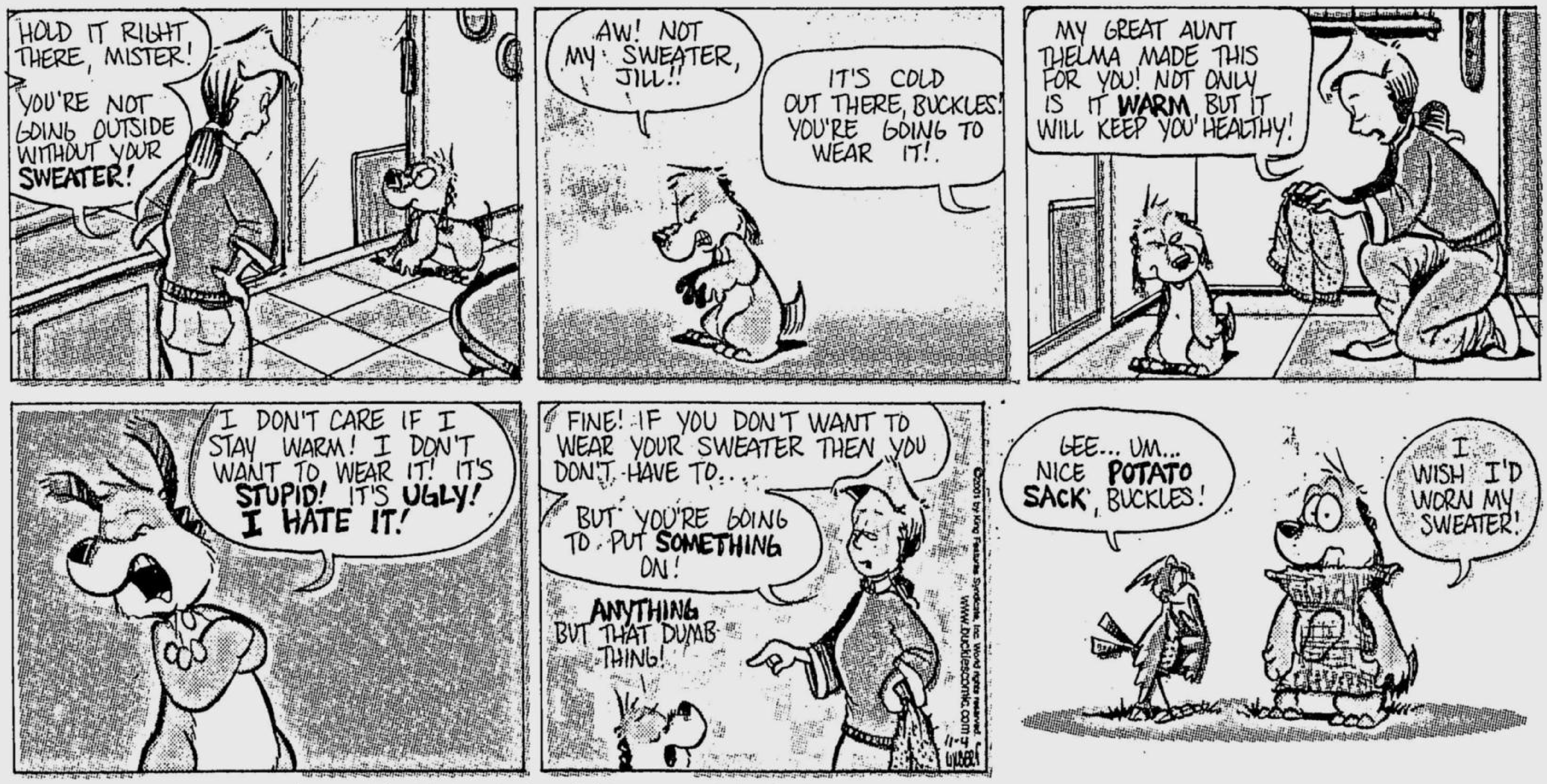
1. French
2. Spanish
3. Chinese (Mandarin)
4. Italian
5. German
6. Japanese
7. Arabic
8. Russian
9. Indonesian
10. Thai
11. Irish
12. Latin
13. Afrikaans
14. Swahili
15. Greek

Ratings

13 - 15 ...... Superbrain
10 - 12 ...... Excellent
7 - 9 ...... Good

BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT


HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, MISTER!
YOU'RE NOT GOING OUTSIDE WITHOUT YOUR SWEATER!
AW! NOT MY SWEATER, JILL!!
IT'S COLD OUT THERE, BUCKLES! YOU'RE GOING TO WEAR IT!.
MY GREAT AUNT THELMA MADE THIS FOR YOU! NOT ONLY IS IT WARM, BUT IT WILL KEEP YOU HEALTHY!
I DON'T CARE IF I STAY WARM! I DON'T WANT TO WEAR IT! IT'S STUPID! IT'S UGLY! I HATE IT!
FINE! IF YOU DON'T WANT TO WEAR YOUR SWEATER THEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO...
BUT YOU'RE GOING TO PUT SOMETHING ON!
ANYTHING BUT THAT DUMB THING!
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11-4
GILBERT
GEE... UM... NICE POTATO SACK, BUCKLES!
I WISH I'D WORN MY SWEATER!

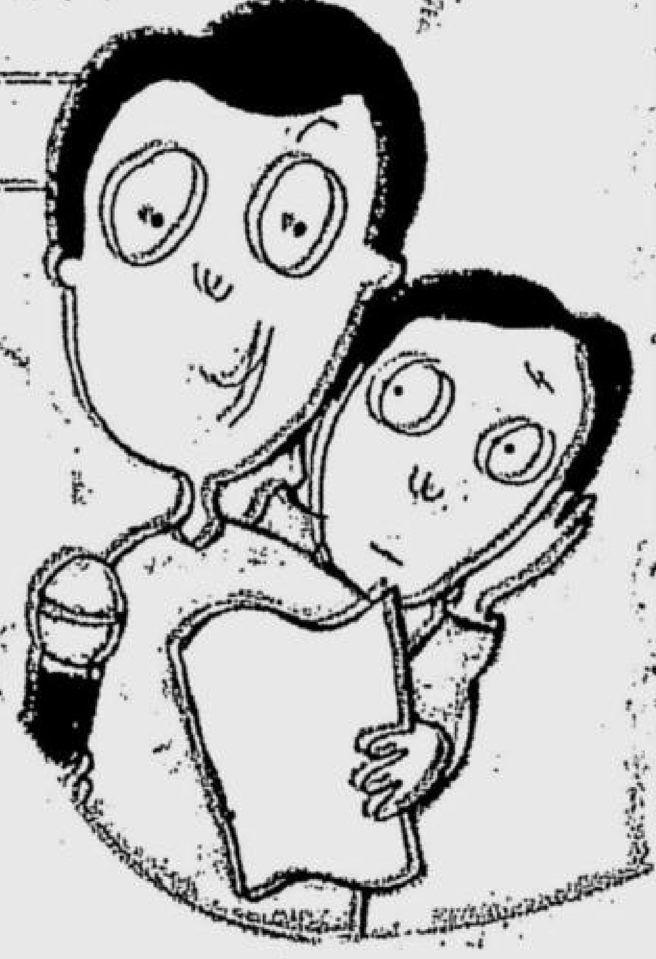
THE LUNCH BOX

by Katrina B. Villa

And My Next Song Is...

Unscramble the titles of these popular Christmas carols, and sing a few!

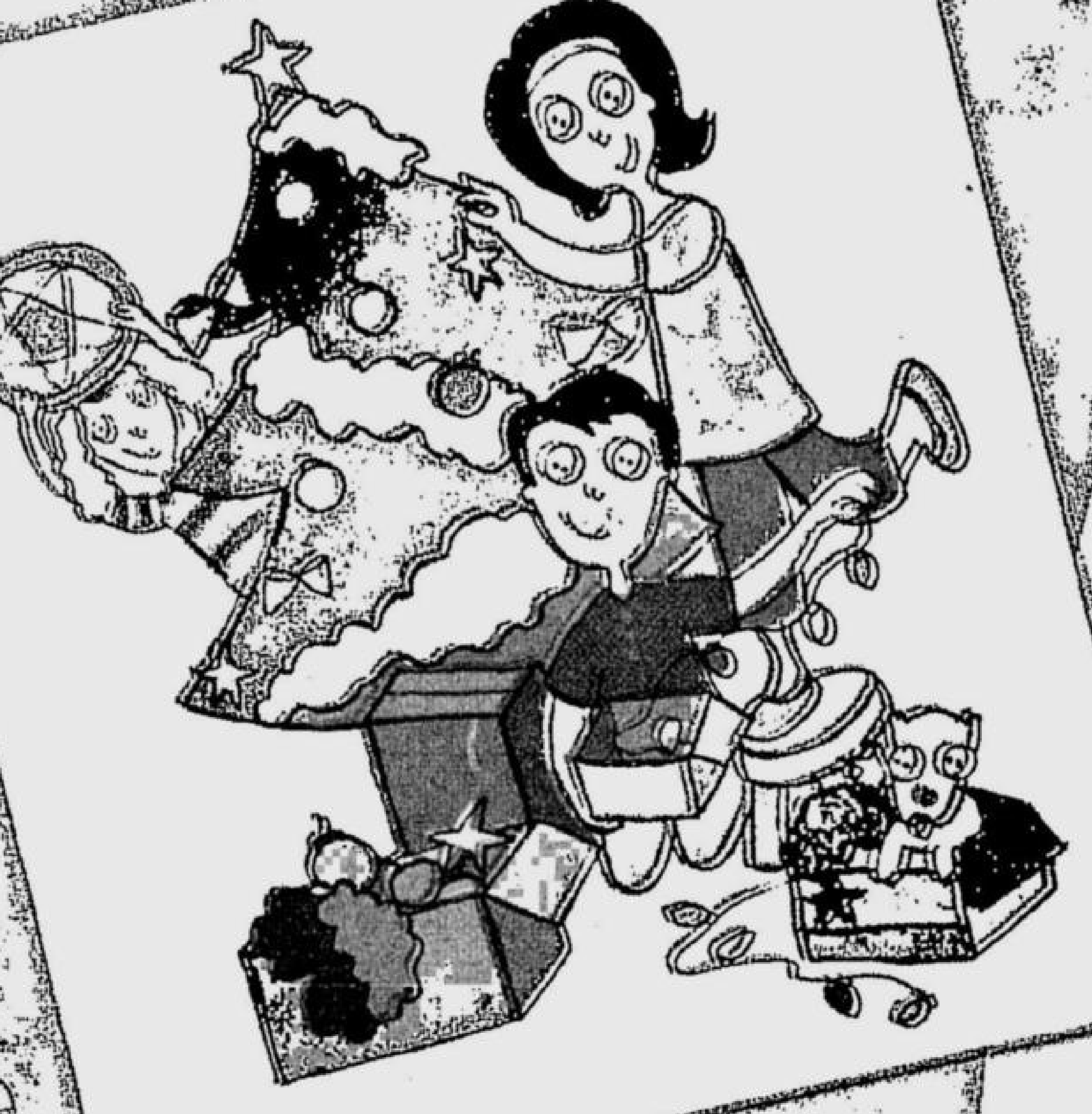
1. HET STIRF ONEL ____________________
2. NELJIG SLELB ____________________
3. TELINS THING ____________________
4. OYJ TO TEH LOWRD ____________________



Answers: 1. The First Noel 2. Jingle Bells 3. Silent Night 4. Joy to the World

TREE'S COMPANY!

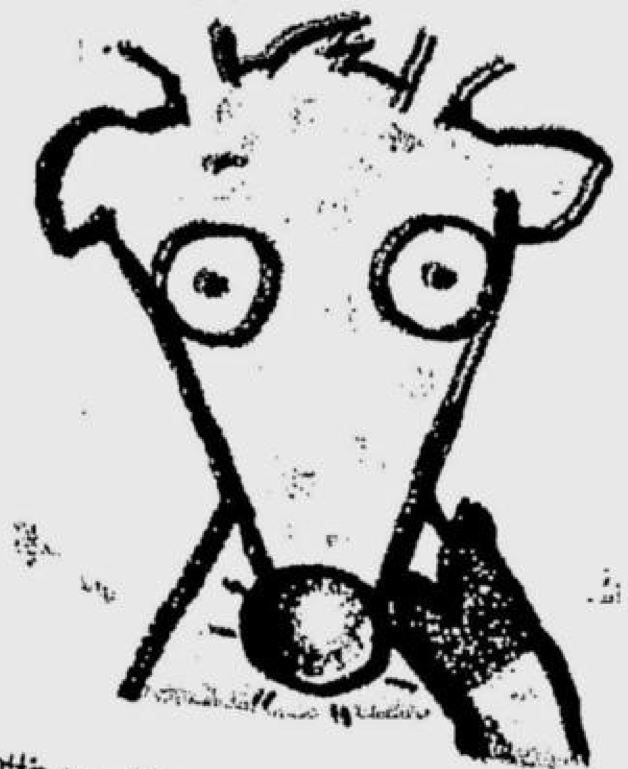
The custom of decorating a tree for Christmas originated in Germany. The practice quickly spread, and now the Christmas tree is one of the most popular symbols for the special season, wouldn't you agree?



FIND 7 STARS IN THIS PICTURE!

DRAW RUDOLPH'S ANTLERS!

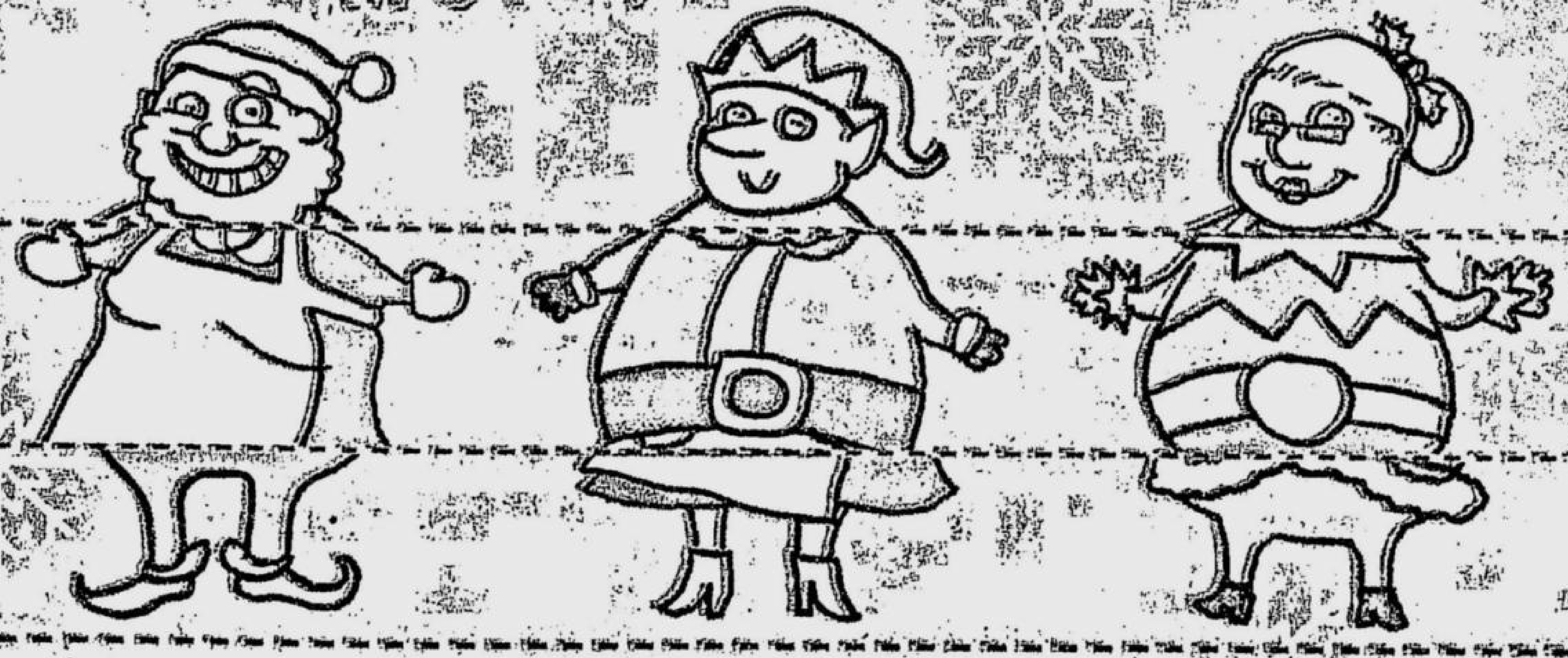
draw antlers here!



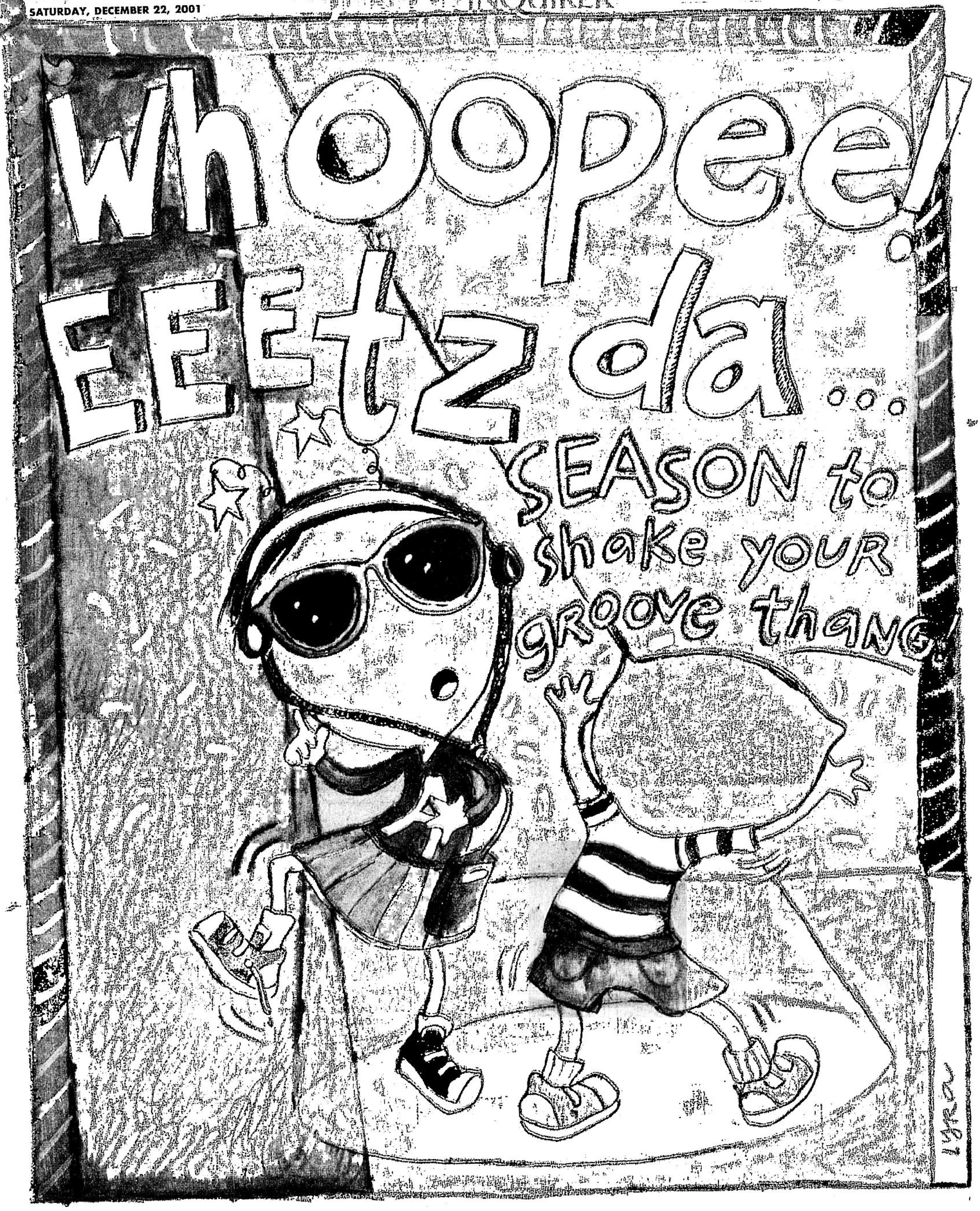
Rudolph seems to have misplaced his antlers! It's your job to draw them on him. Be creative!

Some Suggestions: Fat antlers. Droopy antlers, Disco antlers, Christmas antlers, Clown antlers, Alien Antlers, Multicolor antlers, Furry antlers

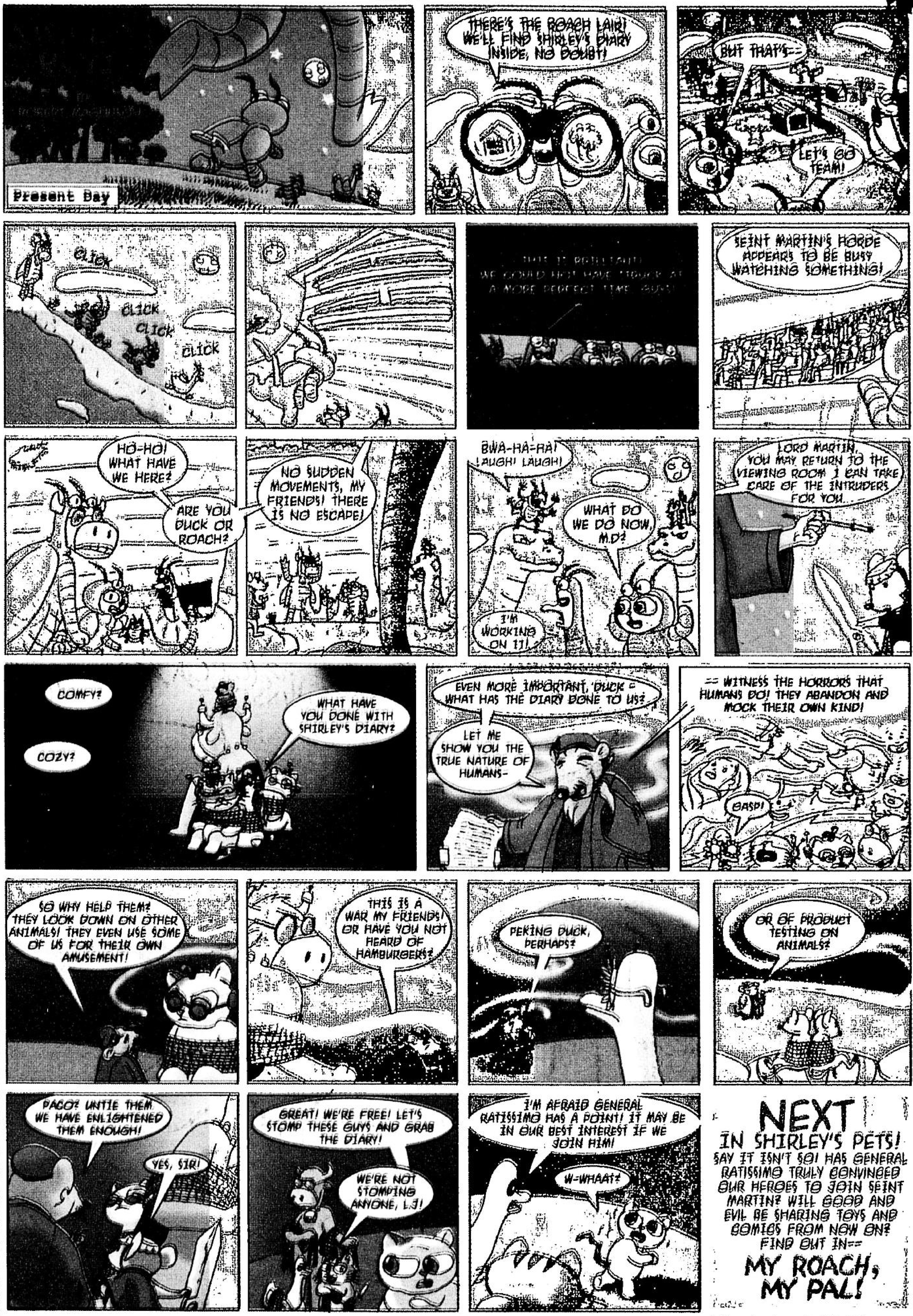
A Merry Mix-Up



Whoa! There's been a mix-up and these 3 Christmas folks need your help!
Put Santa, Mrs. Claus and their trusty Elf back together by cutting along the dotted lines and matching up their body parts.


Whoopee!
EEEtzda...
SEASON to shake your groove thang!
Lyra

SHIRLEY'S PETS 'SUPER-HOLIDAY-LENGTH' STOCKING-STUFFER!


Present Day
THERE'S THE ROACH LAIR! WE'LL FIND SHIRLEY'S DIARY INSIDE, NO DOUBT!
BUT THAT'S--
LET'S GO TEAM!
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
THIS IS BRILLIANT!! WE COULD NOT HAVE STRUCK AT A MORE PERFECT TIME, GUYS!
SEINT MARTIN'S HORDE APPEARS TO BE BUSY WATCHING SOMETHING!
HO-HO! WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
ARE YOU DUCK OR ROACH?
NO SUDDEN MOVEMENTS, MY FRIENDS! THERE IS NO ESCAPE!
BWA-HA-HA! LAUGH! LAUGH!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, M.D?
I'M WORKING ON IT!
LORD MARTIN, YOU MAY RETURN TO THE VIEWING ROOM I CAN TAKE CARE OF THE INTRUDERS FOR YOU.
COMFY?
COZY?
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH SHIRLEY'S DIARY?
EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, DUCK - WHAT HAS THE DIARY DONE TO US?
LET ME SHOW YOU THE TRUE NATURE OF HUMANS-
-- WITNESS THE HORRORS THAT HUMANS DO! THEY ABANDON AND MOCK THEIR OWN KIND!
GASP!
SO WHY HELP THEM? THEY LOOK DOWN ON OTHER ANIMALS! THEY EVEN USE SOME OF US FOR THEIR OWN AMUSEMENT!
THIS IS A WAR MY FRIENDS! OR HAVE YOU NOT HEARD OF HAMBURGERS?
PEKING DUCK, PERHAPS?
OR OF PRODUCT TESTING ON ANIMALS?
PACO? UNTIE THEM WE HAVE ENLIGHTENED THEM ENOUGH!
YES, SIR!
GREAT! WE'RE FREE! LET'S STOMP THESE GUYS AND GRAB THE DIARY!
WE'RE NOT STOMPING ANYONE, L.J!
I'M AFRAID GENERAL RATISSIMO HAS A POINT! IT MAY BE IN OUR BEST INTEREST IF WE JOIN HIM!
W-WHAAT?
NEXT
IN SHIRLEY'S PETS!
SAY IT ISN'T SO! HAS GENERAL RATISSIMO TRULY CONVINCED OUR HEROES TO JOIN SEINT MARTIN? WILL GOOD AND EVIL BE SHARING TOYS AND COMICS FROM NOW ON? FIND OUT IN--
MY ROACH, MY PAL!

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Q: How does The Inquirer protect small fry?

Lastimoso to
INQUIRER
5 cronies found keeping $100M in Swiss banks
se of children by MILF assailed

A: We keep an eye on the big fish.

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